

# LETTERS

ON

## MASONRY AND ANTI-MASONRY,

ADDRESSED TO THE

HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

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BY WILLIAM L. STONE.

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"What I knew to be true, that I will declare; and what I feel it to be my duty to represent, that I will have the boldness to publish."—TIMOTHY PICKERING.

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NEW-YORK:

O. HALSTED, CORNER OF NASSAU AND CEDAR STREETS.

1832.

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Containing a variety of Papers and Documents.

# LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

THE HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

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## LETTER I.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 20, 1831.

SIR,

I have been honored by the receipt, in due course of mail, of your favor of the 27th ultimo. The readiness with which you have assented to my request to be allowed the opportunity of addressing a series of Letters to you upon the subjects of speculative Freemasonry and Anti-masonry—topics of such deep and general interest at the present time,—and the kind and encouraging terms in which that assent is expressed, demand my grateful acknowledgments. It was not without diffidence, more, indeed, than I shall probably receive credit for, that I was induced to prefer such a request. But a variety of circumstances, weighty and powerful in themselves, together with an impression that the labor I propose to perform, may be attended with some benefit to the community, excited and divided as it now is, and threatens long to be, by the distracting question I am to consider, have impelled me to the undertaking.

The formation of the Anti-masonic party, which is now extending itself in various directions, and its effective organization, create an era in the political history of our country. Parties will always exist in republican governments, and indeed, in all governments where the elective principle is recognised. But heretofore, the dividing lines of parties have been drawn, generally, with reference to certain prominent principles of the constitution, or policy of the government. Or, whenever the coincidence of opinion respecting the principles and action of a free government, becomes so general, that room is scarcely afforded for opposition, on the breaking up of old, new parties are formed in respect rather to men than principles. Parties, originally formed upon principle, in such cases, degenerate into factions. The political history of our own country affords ample illustrations of the soundness of these propositions. From the period of the adoption of the federal constitution, down to the close of the last war with Great Britain, the people had been divided into two great parties only. The division originated in differences of principle, touching the powers vested in the general government under the federal compact ; but after the accession of Mr. Jefferson to the presidency, the principles of opposition, down even to the close of Mr. Madison's administration, were rather to be found in relation to the *policy* of the government, than to the *principles* upon which the government was itself constituted. Nevertheless, the dividing line was clearly defined, and always distinctly understood ; at least by the leaders of the different parties, and by their intelligent supporters.

At the close of the late war, however, a recurrence, by the majority, to the leading measures which had been so long and so strenuously advocated by the opposition, disarmed the latter ; and after a few feeble and very partial efforts to prolong the contest under the old watch-words and

banners of the respective parties, the strife ceased, and a truce ensued, which continued nearly to the close of the administration of the late president Monroe. Nor, in the contest for the succession, was the attempt to rally the former parties, as such, successful. At any rate, it was but partially so—although the old party watch-words were rung in all their various changes, by a considerable portion of the public press. The contest of 1824, was essentially for men. There were four candidates for the presidency,—at one period five ;—and yet, with the exception of one of them, the success of whom was identified with the odious practice of congressional caucussing, no controversy respecting the cardinal principles of the government was entertained by either. The general course of national policy to be pursued, internal and external, was believed to be established ; and few persons, warring in the ranks of either of the candidates, contemplated any essential change or departure therefrom. Still, much strife and bitterness of feeling were engendered during the conflict ; and the passions were wrought up to a degree of excitement, if not of positive anger, which forbade their sinking back into that state of repose which could have been desired, on your accession to the chief magistracy of the republic. The calm that followed was deceitful. The aspirants who had been contending in the ranks of the various unsuccessful parties, and fragments of parties, were alike out of place ; and if they had no common bond of union by virtue of any principle, they had at least a common object, and therefore a common interest in acting together, in any new enterprise promising a more propitious result.

The ancient party land-marks having all been erased, and the party watch-words having lost their charm, as the experience of the preceding contest had well demonstrated, it was apparent that an entirely new organization was necessary : a combination was required among materials of the



most heterogeneous and even opposite qualities, possessing no single property or principle of cohesion, save only what may be found in the pregnant and comprehensive phrase—**SELF-INTEREST**. Nor did the managers find it necessary to look for a term of greater significance or power. A new party, numerous and active, sprung up suddenly, as if summoned into existence by the wand of another Prospero. The disaffected of all schools were united,—the Georgian contemner of the treaty-making power; the South Carolinian nullifier; the Virginian strict-constructionist; the free-trade advocate—(as a certain description of speculative political economists call themselves, in contradistinction to those who would foster the industry of their own country by protecting duties, when necessary; )—and the tariff men of Pennsylvania and New-York;—men of rival interests, and of opposite, and even conflicting opinions—all, all combined in the formation of a new party, without reference to antecedent creeds or principles, and with the sole view of self-aggrandisement and power. Their numbers increased beyond precedent or measure: so that after a repose of twelve years and upwards, the country once more found itself divided into two formidable political parties—one of them as we have seen, (the youngest, and, very speedily, the strongest,) so utterly heterogeneous, among its own members, upon every subject but the passion for power, that, were that principle of action removed, we might have anticipated for them the fate of the fabled warriors who sprung from the dragon's teeth of Cadmus, on the casting of even a stone amongst them.

But of all the parties to which I have adverted in this brief retrospect, and of all the factions, and fragments of parties, which at different times, and in different sections of the country, have broken off and divided upon questions of temporary interest and expediency, it may be predicated that the principles of their organization and action have been pretty well understood by the people. They have ei-

ther been combatting for what they supposed to be constitutional principles, or for measures, or for the success of personal favorites, or openly and avowedly for a new division of the spoil. And in either case, the dividing lines of these parties have been well defined. The circumstances out of which they sprung—the principles upon which they have been maintained,—and the objects intended to be effected, have been, among intelligent men at least, well understood.

Such is not the fact, however, with respect to the Anti-masonic party, of which, since it is to form my principal theme, I ought, perhaps, to have spoken with less circumlocution. That is a political party *sui generis*. There was none ever before like unto it. Nor will its likeness, probably, be found in any political party to arise hereafter. It is of but recent origin, and yet is already powerful in numbers—striking deep root in the land, and spreading far and wide its branches. Its progress has hitherto given the lie to prediction, and in its strides it has outstripped the calculations of its friends. Already is its weight heavily felt in our elections, and it bids fair, at no distant day, to exercise a prodigious influence, for weal or for woe, in the political concerns of the republic. “Behold how great a matter ‘a little fire kindleth.’” It is but little more than four years, I believe, since the commencement of this new party. It had its origin in a small town in the interior of this state, with reference, solely, to a town election. Since that period it has drawn into its ranks nearly one hundred thousand free and intelligent electors of the state of New-York ; it has almost divided the vote of Pennsylvania ; it has planted itself deeply in the soil of Massachusetts ; it is spreading in other of the New England states, in Ohio, and elsewhere ; while in Vermont, like the rod of Aaron, it has so far swallowed up both of the former parties, as to have obtained the control of the state government. Nor is it of factious partizans, or disappointed office seekers, that this party is

composed. It is a truth, let partizan opponents say what they please to the contrary, that it comprises among its members, as great a portion of wealth, and character,—of talents and respectability,—as any party of equal numbers, ever formed in this or any other country. And yet I am constrained to believe, that this party, possessing such numbers, and such moral as well as political power, is far from being well understood, or properly appreciated, by a vast majority of the people of these United States. I am constrained to say—for I know the fact—that many gentlemen, filling a wide space in the public eye—eminent for their talents, and distinguished for the soundness of their learning, and the extent of their political information—have no just knowledge or conception of Anti-masonry. They look upon it merely as a party, originating in a spirit of fanaticism, engaged in a crusade against an innocent institution, and proscribing, without reason or justice, all the members of that institution, whether innocent or guilty. They know little of the merits of the case ;—doubt, or affect to doubt, whether any great crime has been committed to justify the excitement out of which it sprung,—and are still less informed as to the wide extent in which, in the course of these Letters, truth will compel me to admit the Masonic institution has been compromised by the dark transaction to which I am referring.

Allowing what I have just been saying to be true, and that it is so, I know from extensive and close personal observation,—may it not, sir, be a matter of profitable inquiry, to ascertain the cause of this want of information, with a view, if possible, by a subsequent investigation of facts, of removing the obstacles to a more general diffusion of light and truth?

In searching for the origin of Anti-masonry, we discover it as proceeding exclusively from the fact, that in the year 1826, a great outrage was committed in the western part

of New-York, against the peace of the people and the majesty of the laws. An extensive conspiracy was formed against a free citizen, commencing in his seizure and abduction, and ending in his murder. The men engaged in this foul conspiracy, thus terminating in a deed of blood, belonged to the society of Freemasons; and the life of the victim was taken, as a punishment for a disclosure, on his part, of what have been deemed the secrets of that institution. The fact of the abduction and murder having been satisfactorily ascertained, the people of that section of country, laboring under a very honest feeling of indignation at the perpetration of such an outrage, set themselves about a thorough investigation of this black transaction. But they soon found their investigations embarrassed, by Freemasons, in every way that ingenuity could devise. At that time, by the then existing law of the state, grand jurors were selected and summoned by the sheriffs of counties. In one county, suspicion was strongly fastened upon the sheriff himself; and the grand jurors summoned by him refused to find bills, where the *ex-parte* testimony was on all hands believed to be sufficient to put the offenders upon their trial. In some instances; where convictions were had for the lesser crime of abduction, the parties offending, so far from having been expelled from their respective lodges for their crimes, received aid and comfort from their brethren. In others, some witnesses stood mute; others were believed to have perjured themselves; while in other cases, the Masons on the petit juries, would refuse to convict, even where the testimony was strong as proofs of holy writ. The arm of the law was raised, and the power and authority of the state invoked and exercised in vain; while the grand supervising bodies of the Masonic institution, were themselves strongly suspected of favoring the cause of the accused. The natural consequence of such a chain of circumstances, was to increase the excitement of the people at every new development of facts.

and to chafe them into a yet more angry mood, with every successive disappointment. A large portion of the press, moreover, either observed an ominous silence, or attempted to heap ridicule upon those who honestly believed the blood of an innocent man to be crying from the ground for vengeance.

Thus irritated and inflamed, the Anti-masons no longer confined their denunciations to a few misguided Masonic fanatics at the west, but proceeded in no measured terms, to denounce the whole fraternity, and to hold the institution of Freemasonry itself as directly responsible for the alleged murder. At one time it was said that the Grand Lodge, at another that the Grand Chapter, and at another that the General Grand Chapter, had directly authorised and required the murder of the victim—whose name, I need not add, was **WILLIAM MORGAN**. Nay, more, an illustrious citizen, now no more, whose life was a pattern of public and private integrity and virtue, and whose name is proudly associated with the glory of his country, was basely coupled with the conspirators; while newspaper files, and the records of coroners' offices, were ransacked for cases of suicide, to be charged as so many additional murders upon the Freemasons. A number of seceding Masons disclosed a series of oaths, purporting to be those administered in the lodges and chapters, which, unexplained, look frightfully enough, I admit; but which, according to the construction put upon them by the Anti-masons, would not only cover every crime and every enormity, against the laws alike of God and man, that Masons could commit, but would compel the participation in crime, of all who have taken such obligations. Feeling keenly the injustice of such sweeping denunciations, the Masons, in turn, became highly exasperated. Thousands and tens of thousands of men, as virtuous and as pure in their lives and conversation as any in the republic—men exalted by their talents, and the splendor of

their public services—or for their piety and benevolence in the walks of private life—of a sudden found themselves charged with infidelity, blasphemy, and murder. They could not brook it. Many thousands of them were only nominally Freemasons. They had joined the society when young men, as a benevolent social institution, relinquishing it in a few years, to attend to the more important concerns of life, but without perceiving any harm in it. There were thousands and tens of thousands more, preserving their relationship to the institution, who absolutely not only knew nothing of the abduction and murder of William Morgan—but who had actually never heard of the person, or his book, until months after his bones were whitening at the bottom of the Niagara. And again, there were thousands of Masons, as well as others, who believed, (and many of them so believe unto this day,) that the whole story of the abduction and murder was an ingeniously devised fiction, got up for the purpose of realizing a fortune from the sale of a book—pretending to be a revelation of the secrets of Freemasonry. All these classes of Masons felt not only insulted, but aggrieved, at the wholesale charges brought against them. When personally assailed, it was in vain that they opened their mouths in explanation or defence, or that they expressed the deep abhorrence with which they looked upon the crime that had been committed. They were roughly told that those oaths, those horrible oaths, were upon them, and that consequently it was utterly out of their power to speak the truth of the order. The effect upon the social relations, in many peaceful communities, was such as all good men could but deplore. Friendships were broken amongst neighbors; the harmony of the social fire-side was destroyed; the pastors of the christian religion were driven from their flocks, and exemplary professors thrust rudely from the communion table.

Thus arose a mutual state of distrust and exasperation. Many thousands of honest and intelligent men have brought themselves to believe, that Masons have so bound themselves by horrible oaths, that they are disqualified for performing the duty even of good citizens—much less for discharging faithfully the duties imposed by civil trusts of any description whatever. And they are consequently from year to year appealing to the ballot boxes for such a decision from the people, as will sustain their views. While on the other hand, the great majority of the Masons, particularly beyond the state of New-York, and the numerous body within the state, who feel a proud consciousness of their own individual honor and integrity, and who condemn the Morgan outrage as much as the most indignant Anti-mason can do it, are bent on opposing the crusade against them with equal pertinacity. Sorry am I to add my fears, that the obstinacy on both sides, is but too often indulged at the expense of what the parties know and feel to be the true interests of the country.

Such a state of feeling, it will readily be conceded, is in no wise favorable to a calm investigation as to the merits of the controversy. On the one hand, the Anti-masons persist in holding the whole Masonic fraternity guilty—imputing that guilt to the nature of the institution itself—and refusing to allow any explanations as to the manner in which Freemasonry was received, understood and practised by virtuous and intelligent men. Such explanations, they affect to believe, would not only be *ex-parte*, but unworthy of credit, on account of the “horrible oaths.” Indeed they invert the sound maxim of the common law, which declares that every man is to be considered innocent until he is proved guilty, and believe every Mason guilty who is not proved innocent. On the other hand, an equally strong prejudice against the Anti-masons, has prevented the vast body of Ma-

sons, who are in truth and in fact innocent of all the charges directly advanced, or insinuated against them, from that full and impartial inquiry into the whole history of the Morgan outrage, which its importance demands. The consequence is, that they are not aware of the extent to which the Masonic institution of this state, stands compromised in relation to the Morgan outrage, and the subsequent efforts to succor, and even to screen, the guilty. They, on their part, moreover, look upon the Anti-masonic publications as *ex-parte*, and will not believe them.

Here, in my opinion, lies the great difficulty in question. The mutual hostility of the parties, engendered as I have related, has prevented that calm and deliberate search after truth that is needed. These asperities must be softened. The Anti-masons must be made to perceive, that, whatever they may think of Freemasonry itself, their indiscriminate proscription of its members, whom they know to be pure and virtuous, patriotic and upright citizens, is cruel and unjust. The Masons, on their part, must in like manner be made to perceive, that there has been great cause for the excitement and indignation of the Anti-masons. They must likewise be made to perceive, that the masonic institution, having over a wide region of country been corrupted and abused—nay, stained with blood which its officers have not tried to wipe away—is liable to be so abused and corrupted again; and, therefore, that it cannot and ought not longer to be sustained.

To produce these results, is the design of the undertaking upon which I have now commenced. In the minds of many, the attempt may argue on my part no small degree of presumption. Still, I have the vanity to believe I shall be in a degree successful—that my labors will tend, in some small measure at least, to advance the cause of truth and justice. The Anti-masons know me well. They know that from the outset, my course upon the subject of this unhappy excitement, and the tragical cause of it, has been open,



straight-forward, free and independent. They know that neither threats, nor abuse, nor motives of self-interest, have deterred me from speaking or publishing the truth—and the whole truth. By them, therefore, I shall be read and believed. The intelligent and virtuous members of the Masonic fraternity likewise know me. They know me as a Mason, who, for ample cause, as will be seen hereafter, has not attended the sittings of any lodge, since the atrocity of the west was disclosed, but who has nevertheless made no renunciation. By them, therefore, I likewise trust I shall be read, and I hope also by them to be believed. In any event, my aim will be impartiality and truth. The search for the latter, I am aware, will be laborious, even if it can at all times be discerned. "Truth," to borrow a beautiful simile from Milton, "came once into the world with her divine master, and was a perfect shape, most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, there straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as the story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely frame into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them." Like the widowed divinity of the mythology, I, also, shall search up and down after the scattered members of the victim; and although I may not promise in bringing together every joint and limb to mould them as Isis did, into "an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection," yet I trust I shall not fail in presenting her plain, honest features, though in humble garb, to the recognition of the public.

It is no part of my design to write a vindication of Freemasonry, as such. Its character, its usefulness, and its res-

pectability are gone, and its officers and members, throughout the Union, would act wisely to bury all their tools and implements, and inscribe the name ICHABOD on the capstone. But it will be my object to describe Freemasonry as I received, understood, and practised it myself, and as it has been received, understood and practised by the hundreds of excellent men—of sound heads, and pure hearts,—whom I have known to be Freemasons, and with whom, before the black outrage which has disgraced and destroyed the institution, I have had the happiness to associate in the lodge room. Having discharged this duty to those of my brethren who are worthy citizens, and having, (as I hope I shall be able to do,) relieved them from a heavy weight of the odium unjustly cast upon such Masons, I shall next proceed to give a full and impartial history, without fear, favor or affection, of or for any one, of the origin, rise and progress of Anti-masonry—nothing extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice—embracing an account of the original quarrel with Morgan, together with a succinct history of the several trials that have taken place in relation to the subject, with all the pertinent and material facts elicited, in testimony, together with such other incidental information as may be found interesting and authentic.

You will perceive, sir, that I have entered upon a wide field of investigation; but I hope in the course of the winter to accomplish the task in a manner that will be equally satisfactory to yourself and the public, while at the same time its tendency may be to allay excitement and animosity, and to produce a better understanding among good men now widely apart, but who love the country and its inhabitants with equal ardor and sincerity.

I am, sir, with sentiments of high respect,

Your very humble servant.

## LETTER II.

NEW-YORK, NOV. 25, 1831.

SIR,

Pursuing the design of this correspondence, in the manner indicated in my former Letter, it will be first in order to speak of the Masonic institution as I first became acquainted with it. My object in making this exposition is two-fold, viz: to show, not only, (as I have previously intimated,) how gentlemen of intelligence and moral worth, have received and understood the subject, but to show also, how they could consistently remain attached to the institution, so long at least as they supposed it to be free from crime, and incapable of abuse, notwithstanding the ridicule which has been cast upon its ceremonies by caricature-representations. Much of the language of Freemasonry is allegorical; and the emblems and symbols used, are, many of them, pregnant with useful instruction. The moral virtues and duties, and some of the soundest religious truths, are imprinted on the mind, and impressed upon the memory, by lively and sensible images;—and although I have never witnessed any of the burlesque representations to which I have just referred, I can yet easily perceive how they may be rendered exceedingly ridiculous in the eyes of a popular audience, by a mock display upon the stage. But this fact is no evidence either of weakness or folly, on the part of those who are actually receiving moral instruction from these symbolic lessons, in a well regulated lodge room.

It was towards the close of the year 1815, that I was initiated into the first, or entered apprentice's degree of Masonry, in the lodge at Hudson, in the county of Columbia,

(N. Y.) I was moved to take the leap in the dark, more by that prurient curiosity incident to our species, than from any other consideration. In common with others, I had heard much of the antiquity of the order, but had never taken the trouble to examine its vaunted pretensions, and cared little about them. My impression was, that it might possibly date its associated origin back to the period of the crusades, but probably no farther. Certainly, the idea that by joining the society, I was to become possessed of some mighty secret of priceless value, and infinite importance, or that my mind was suddenly to be illuminated by a blaze of intellectual light, after entering the lodge room, was far from being entertained. Still, however, after having been conducted through the ceremonies, which were well administered, by expert officers, and which, with the explanations given, appeared, to say the least, very harmless, candor obliges me to confess that I felt not a little disappointed. But it was a disappointment at, I knew not what,—a sort of undefinable sensation—neither a positive feeling of dissatisfaction, nor of chagrin, but yet a little of both. Probably I felt something like the Syrian leper, when the prophet, instead of going out and “doing some great thing,” told him simply to go wash himself in the river. There were at the time about a dozen of us, young gentlemen, at lodgings together, several of the elder of whom were already Masons of some years standing; and whenever these returned from the lodge, it was often the habit of the residue of the circle, to indulge, sometimes in harmless pleasantries at their expense, and at others in severer satires. And it is not unlikely that these very conversations were the immediate cause of our joining the institution. I use the plural pronoun, because, to my infinite surprise, when I was ‘brought from darkness to light,’ to use the language of the craft,—being the last of a number of candidates admitted on that evening,—I found several of my daily companions initiates before me. An

eclaircissement was now inevitable, and the fact was of course disclosed, that we had each taken the preparatory measures for initiation with so much secrecy that neither had indicated his intention to his most confidential friends. Two of the number were promising young clergymen, one of whom is now a divine in Philadelphia, distinguished alike for his eloquence and his piety. I could easily discern that the feelings of all these were in unison with my own. Nor did the same observation, in regard to all the *élèves*, escape the attention of older members of the fraternity, and they accordingly very soon re-assured us, by stating the fact, that the first step, or degree, was merely intended to introduce the candidate into the lodge, and that the higher mysteries of the order would be disclosed to us afterwards. In the mean time the lectures appertaining to the first degree, and the charges, were duly recited to us, and with effect. I have already mentioned, incidentally, the importance of having officers who understand their duties, and who are withal men of intelligence, and education. To the want of presiding officers of this description, may probably be attributed, in a great measure, the deplorable transactions of which it will hereafter be my duty to speak in terms of the strongest condemnation. On the present occasion, however, there was no cause of fault-finding upon this score. The emblems of this degree, of which I shall speak more at large, in another communication, when I come to discuss the charge brought against the institution of infidelity, were happily and readily explained. The most prominent of these emblems, was the star in the east, which guided the eastern Magi to the humble couch of the infant Saviour of men. There were other emblems, teaching, first, the propriety of maintaining regularity of life, and attending to the due improvement of time, by conforming to the prescribed rules for which, eight hours were allotted to repose, eight to labor, and eight to the service of God. Secondly, the cleansing of

our hearts and minds from every vice, was inculcated—"thereby fitting our bodies, as living stones," for that spiritual edifice built by the great architect of the universe, beyond the stars. There were other emblems in this first step, representing human life as being chequered with good and evil ;—pointing to the comforts and blessings that surround us ;—and impressing upon our minds the necessity of our reliance upon divine providence. Our imperfect condition by nature was likewise adverted to, and the state of perfection to which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, aided by the blessing of God upon our own endeavors, and a due observance of the holy scriptures, as pointing out the whole duty of man. Indeed every thing in this degree was adapted to impress upon the mind of the candidate the necessity of maintaining purity of life and conduct, in order to ensure a happy immortality. The badge of the degree, we were informed, was a white lamb-skin—an emblem of innocence and purity of life. Our minds, we were told, were to be continually directed to heaven ; and in explanation of the emblem of a ladder upon the Masonic carpet, we were referred to that singular vision of Jacob, so expressly symbolical of the universal providence of God—the flight of steps uniting earth and heaven, with the ministering angels continually ascending and descending—watching over us, and, as it were, conveying the wants of man to his maker, and bringing down the commands and the blessings of his maker to his creatures. Instructive lessons were likewise inculcated upon the moral duties of brotherly love, the relief of the distressed, and the attribute of truth, as the foundation of all virtue. This part of the exercise was succeeded by a satisfactory explanation of the four cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice. The result of the performance, on the whole, imparted satisfaction ; and the ceremony of closing the lodge, the utmost solemnity and order being preserved, was striking and agreeable. The

beautiful words of the closing prayer:—"May the blessing of heaven rest upon us, and all regular Masons! May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us," with the universal response of "Amen"—fell upon our ears impressively.

On the next night of meeting, the initiates were of course allowed to be present at the opening of the lodge: and equally impressive on that occasion was the ceremony, as at the conclusion of the last sitting—every thing being conducted in such manner as to inculcate respect for those in authority, with solemn reverence and adoration for the deity, whose blessing and direction in our labors, was invoked—not in a light and thoughtless manner, as some may perhaps infer, but with the gravity and decency of a well regulated church. The charge on opening a lodge, is in the words of the 133d psalm:—"Behold! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded a blessing, even life for evermore." Such a charge, being appropriately pronounced to an audience apparently feeling the force of every word, was certainly well calculated to arrest the attention, and, for a time at least, to soften the asperities of temper, to chasten the mind and the heart, and in all respects to make a favorable impression, even upon those whose temperaments and habits were not of a decidedly religious character.

And here—(for I shall probably not have a better place)—it occurs to me to answer an oft-repeated accusation against the Masons, which has not been originated, like many others, since the Morgan outrage, and the consequent excitement, but which is of long standing: I mean the charge of intemperance, and riotous excesses, in the lodges; and that,

too, at the expense of the funds, collected, as it is pretended, for charitable purposes. I know not what may have been the practice in lodges, and among Masons, capable of plotting the abduction, and compassing the murder, of a free citizen. But I do know, that within what was once the wide circle of my Masonic acquaintance, the charge is wholly, and in all respects, untrue. There are portions of the ceremonies, that necessarily create some noise, and apparent confusion, and which, being heard in other parts of the houses containing lodge-rooms, may, and probably have, at times, induced the opinion, that the sounds arose from carousals, and obstreperous mirth. Yet, as far as my observation has extended, such was not the fact. When I first joined the order, and for about two years thereafter, it was the custom "to call from labor to refreshment," to be technical again, for a short time before the final closing of the lodge. But the refreshments were invariably of the most simple description, being confined to crackers and cheese, and sometimes a cold cut of ham, with a moderate supply of cider, or spirits and water—nothing more. Wine was never introduced, except on the two festivals of John the Baptist, and the Evangelist—these two being the only festivals the celebration of which was allowed within the lodges. Even those simple and very frugal refreshments were prohibited, however, in the year 1817, by the Grand Lodge, and from that day to the present, no ardent spirits have been allowed within the lodges. When the lodge was temporarily closed, for refreshment, the members were told that they might enjoy themselves with innocent mirth; but the charge was explicit—"You are carefully to avoid excess. You are not to compel any brother to act contrary to his inclination, or give offence by word or deed, but enjoy a free and easy conversation. You are to use no immoral or obscene discourse, but at all times to support with propriety, the dignity of your character."



It is true that in some of the more select lodges, such as the Holland Lodge, and the Adelphi, in this city, suppers are spread, at the close of the winter monthly communications; and collations of cold tongues, fruits, &c., during the warm season. But these meals are, in all cases, paid for by the private subscriptions of members. In no instance, previously to the year 1827, did I ever know, or even suspect, a prodigal or improper use of the fund sacred to the cause of charity. And in no societies of men, associated for any purpose whatever, have I uniformly witnessed more grave, orderly and decorous conduct than in the lodge room. The prayers of the various services are as devotional as the excellent liturgy of the episcopal church; and whenever clergymen have been present, as members, or visiting brethren, the practice has usually been to lay aside the forms, and request them to officiate in their stead. I have now in my eye, several clergymen, some of them in this city, eminent for their talents and piety, to whom I could appeal for the correctness of this declaration. So far, then, as it respects the charges of riotous and excessive eating and drinking, of disorderly and unseemly conduct in the lodge-room, and of wasting or perverting the charity funds, I trust that I have succeeded in effacing the misrepresentation. Yet, still, I am not prepared to deny, that the tendency of frequent lodge meetings, operating upon men of weak minds and idle habits—men, in short, who ought never to have been admitted as members—may not always have been of the happiest description. The frequent association of numbers of men, at taverns, particularly in country villages, and the keeping of late hours, have always an unfavorable effect upon the morals of those who thus assemble together. But the effect is equally pernicious, and equally certain, whether these collections are occasioned by Masonic lodges, or sheriffs' juries, or justices' courts, military trainings, cattle shows, or country auctions. And if Masons fall into

habits of indolence or intemperance, in consequence of clustering together at public houses, they do so in defiance alike of the example and instruction of the lodge-room, where they are solemnly charged "to avoid all irregularity and intemperance." And if, therefore, the same vices beset the hangers-on of petty courts, and the loungers about country stores, &c., why should the Masonic lodges alone be singled out for condemnation? But I have digressed farther than I had intended, and must return to the subject directly in hand, viz: the second degree, or step, of Freemasonry.

In the course of the ceremonies of this second, or fellow-craft's degree, there was a recapitulation of the ceremonies of the first. The emblems of the degree, we were told, were the plumb-line, the square, and the level—the first admonishing us to walk uprightly before God and man; the second, to square our actions by the square of virtue; and the third, that we are all travelling upon the level of time, "to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." The idea of the plumb-line is taken from the prophecy of Amos, vii. 7, 8, which is read in conferring the degree. The lessons and lectures of this degree are copious, embracing the definitions of operative and speculative Masonry; some account of the globe and its uses, well adapted to a juvenile class in a common school; brief and correct accounts of the five several orders of architecture, of which, however, we were told that no more than three were revered by Masonry, viz: the original Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders. Next followed an analysis of the five external senses, of hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting. To this succeeded a rapid explanation of what were denominated the seven liberal arts and sciences, viz: grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy—all of which, with the illustrations thereto added, would no doubt have been vastly edifying to the younger

inmates of a boarding school, and would, unquestionably, have imprinted on their tender minds many wise and serious truths. With a charge to study these liberal arts ; to believe that Masonry and Geometry were originally the same thing ; to observe the rules and regulations of the order ; and an admonition never to palliate or aggravate the offences of our brethren, but in the decision of every rule to judge with candor, admonish with friendship, and reprehend with justice, we found ourselves fellow-craftsmen, " worthy " and well qualified,"—and the lodge was closed.

Thus far my companions and myself—for we continued to travel together the whole journey, after Masonic light—had certainly made no discovery of any grand secret ; but as we had seen nothing that struck us as being particularly objectionable—nothing, in fact, but what was promotive of philanthropy and benevolence—of pure morality, if not of the more active principles of religion—and as we were promised much of the " sublime and beautiful " in the degree next in order, we were induced to proceed.

Accept, sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration, &c.

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### LETTER III.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 27, 1831.

SIR,

Having described my entrance into the portals of the Masonic edifice in my last communication, the next duty enjoined upon myself, is the discussion of the third step of Freemasonry, viz: " the sublime degree of a master Mason." It is the obligation supposed to be given in this degree, in connexion with that of the seventh, or royal arch, against which the greatest objections have been raised by the Anti-

masonic party; although you, sir, have assured me, that the obligation supposed to be administered in conferring the first degree, is quite enough, in your view, to establish the wicked character of the institution. You will, however, have perceived, sir, that in neither of the preceding degrees, of which it is believed a true and faithful account has been given, have I spoken of the obligations. My object in avoiding them at the present time, is, that they may be made the subject of separate consideration, in a subsequent letter.

After the lodge has been regularly opened in this degree, the work is introduced, on the entrance of the candidate, by the reading of that beautiful and exquisitely touching portion of the penitential hymn of king Solomon, called the Ecclesiastes, xii. 1, 7,—“Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth,” &c. In the course of the ceremonies, there is a prayer of deep devotion and pathos, composed of some of the most sublime and affecting passages of that splendid sacred drama of Araby, the book of Job. This prayer includes a portion of the burial service of the protestant episcopal church, and is full of tenderness and beauty. The working tools of the master Mason, we were informed, were the same as those used in the preceding degrees, with the addition of the trowel—an implement used in operative Masonry in spreading the cement which unites the building into one common mass; but in speculative Masonry, it is a figurative instrument for spreading the cement of brotherly love. The emblems presented and explained in this degree, were—the pot of incense, indicating that a pure heart is ever an acceptable sacrifice to the deity, “and as this glows with fervent heat, so should our hearts glow with gratitude to the great and beneficent author of our existence, for the manifold blessings and comforts we enjoy.” The book of constitutions, guarded by the tyler’s sword, teaches watchfulness and caution, in our thoughts, words and actions.

The sword pointing to a naked heart, denotes that justice will sooner or later overtake us ; while the all-seeing eye, reminds us that our thoughts, words and actions, though hidden from the eyes of men, are ever scanned by the searcher of hearts. Hope, is of course indicated by the anchor, and the ark is to waft those who spend their lives well, over the troublesome sea of life, into that peaceful haven, " where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." We were told that the 47th problem of Euclid is introduced into this degree, as a stimulus to Masons to become lovers of the arts. The hour glass and the scythe, were duly explained ; the former as an emblem of human life, the sands of which are swiftly running away ; and the latter to show how easily the brittle thread of life is cut, and what havoc is made by the scythe of time. The last emblems of this degree, are the three steps delineated on the Masonic carpet, representing the three stages of human life—youth, manhood, and age. In youth we were charged to be industrious and acquire knowledge, as entered apprentices ; in manhood to apply our knowledge in a suitable discharge of our duties to God, our neighbors, and ourselves ; and in age to enjoy the consolations of a well-spent life, in the hope of a glorious immortality. Another definition which I have seen in a book upon Masonry, but never heard in a lodge, is, that the three degrees, or steps, are emblems of the three divine dispensations of grace,—the antediluvian, the masonic, and the christian : the first inculcating the religion of nature ; and the others the existence of a God, and our duty to him and our neighbors. I know not whether this has ever been used in a lodge. But that the antediluvian age was the era of natural religion, particularly, is not a very sound proposition in theology.

The illustrations of these several emblems, as in the preceding degrees, were well enough ; but still I cannot deny that they have the appearance of puerility. I have often

been amused, however, at the close resemblance existing between the explanation of the hour glass, which no doubt has been correctly handed down to us, "in due and ancient form," and a memorable passage of Shakspeare. In the explanation of this emblem, the candidate is admonished, at the close, almost in the very words of the great dramatist,—“Thus wastes man! to-day, he puts forth the tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms, and bears his blushing honors thick upon him; the next day comes a frost, which nips the shoot, and when he thinks his greatness is still aspiring, he falls, like autumn leaves to enrich our mother earth.” It has been urged by unbelievers in the high antiquity of Masonry, that the bard of Avon, who has ranged air, earth, and ocean, in search of similes and figures of speech, would in some way or other have alluded to the Freemasons, had the institution been known in his day. Undoubtedly some of the heroes, wise men, or clowns of his plays, would have had something to say of, or about, Masonry,—some commendations to bestow upon it, or satires to play off at its expense, had the society been then in existence. The fact, I believe, is true, that Shakspeare has not allowed either Falstaff, or Dame Quickly, or any other of his real or imaginary characters, to allude to the institution. And yet Cardinal Wolsey, when “bidding farewell to all his greatness,” soliloquises in the same terms, quoted above, with scarcely a change of words, and those only making the language rather more poetical.

“This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him:  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;  
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,—  
And then he falls, as I do.”

Now, whether Shakspeare borrowed from the archives of Masonry, or the Masons from Shakspeare, is a point

which I will leave it for the wisdom of others to determine, in such manner as may best suit their own views.

This third degree is a favorite with Masons generally, being considered rather as a *chef d'œuvre* in the craft, not even excepting the more exalted degree of the royal arch. Indeed, properly speaking, there are but three degrees of ancient Masonry, all others having been engrafted upon the original stock, within the last hundred years, as will more fully appear hereafter. It is in this degree that king Solomon is first introduced as an illustrious exemplar of Masonry; and it is here, also, that the lights of Masonic tradition are first suffered to shine upon the candidates—lights whose rays, of course, never gleam athwart the vision of the uninitiated world.

The ceremonies of this degree, exclusive of the mere forms of proceeding in imposing the obligation, and giving the moral instructions already noticed, are dramatic, and there is an enactment of a tragedy—not a real one, however, like that of Niagara—but a representation intended to exemplify a singular instance of virtue, fortitude, and integrity. In the course of the lecture, the history of the building of Solomon's temple is adverted to, and if the lodge-room is well furnished, a drawing of the edifice is exhibited—such as we all have seen, though upon a larger scale, drafted, of course, from the unscientific and altogether unsatisfactory account of that splendid monument of the wealth of the wisest of kings, as contained in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Explanations are attempted of the size of the temple, the number of columns, pilasters, &c., and a variety of architectural details, which it is quite unnecessary for me to enumerate. The account of the scriptures, corroborated by Josephus, is given, of the number of workmen employed in the preparation of materials, and in rearing this wonderful structure. The 70,000 porters of burdens, of the scriptures, are masonically called entered ap-

prentices ; and in like manner, the 80,000 hewers of stone, are denominated fellow-crafts. The sacred historian informs us that " Besides the chief of Solomon's officers that were over the work, there were three thousand and three hundred which ruled over the people that wrought in the work." The Masonic tradition assures us that these 3800 were masters ; and over the whole number, three grand masters presided. These three grand masters were Solomon, king of Israel ; Hiram, king of Tyre ; and Hiram Abiff, the chief artist, and the widow's son, mentioned in 1 Kings, vii. 14, and again, 2 Chron., ii. 13. These three grand officers had systematized the orders of Masonry—they alone possessing the master Mason's word. It was intended, of course, by the numerous entered apprentices and fellow-crafts, that when the temple was completed, and they should go forth upon the wide world for employment, the bond of union formed while building the temple, should be preserved ; while it was believed that the reputation acquired by having been engaged upon such an edifice as the mighty temple of the Hebrew Deity, would give them advantages over all other Masons, wherever they might go. The master Mason's word, in the possession only of the three grand masters, it was understood, was to be given at the completion of the temple, to such of the fellow-crafts, &c. as should be found worthy—but it could only be given by the three. However, three ruffians, named Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum, jealous lest they should at last be turned away ignorant of the inestimable secret, finally way-laid the grand master artizan, in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, where he was wont, daily, to go to worship God and draw his designs, with the intention of extorting the secret from him, or taking his life. Faithful to his trust, the widow's son retained the secret, and the ruffians murdered him. They buried him secretly, and fled. Pursuers were sent in all directions—the villains were heard of on the way to



Joppa—some of the fellow crafts, in pursuit, overheard them bewailing their conduct from the cleft of a rock in which they had secreted themselves ;—and, to make a long story short, they were arrested, and taken back to king Solomon, by whose order they were masonically executed. The murdered body of Hiram was afterwards found, by a mere accident, where it had been buried, in a hill-side. In depositing it, the ruffians had planted over the grave a shrub of cassia ; some person, when ascending the hill, taking casually hold of the bush for support, it came up, and the loosened earth beneath it, created a suspicion which led to the discovery. Solomon, with a lodge of fellow-crafts, went out to raise the corpse. With the death of Hiram, the master's word was lost, because it could only be given in the presence, and by the assistance, of three—and at that time only three persons possessed it, viz : Solomon and the two Hiram. In this dilemma it was agreed that on raising the body, the first word spoken should be and remain a substitute for the lost master's word.

Such is an outline of the story represented in the process of conferring the "sublime degree of a master Mason;"—and it is clearly as clumsy an absurdity,—as gross a fiction—as ever was palmed upon the credulity of man,—violating alike history, probability, and common sense. Nor is it only recently that the imposture has been confessed. It was so admitted twenty-nine years ago, by the Rev. Dr. Dalcho, a distinguished member of the craft, then grand master of South Carolina, in a masonic oration delivered by him in 1803. "I candidly confess," says the Rev. grand master, "that I feel a very great degree of embarrassment while I am relating to ministers of God's holy word, or to any other gentleman, a story founded on the grossest errors of accumulated ages ; errors which they can prove to me to be such from the sacred pages of holy writ, and from profane history, written by men of integri-

"ty and talents, and that, too, in a minute after I have solemnly pronounced them to be undeniable truths ; even "by that very bible on which I have received their obligation." Professor Stuart, of Andover, one of the most skillful linguists, and learned men in our country, has also shown, from the internal evidences of our own books, that the whole story of these assassins, as narrated in the legend, is an imposture, since, most unfortunately for the authenticity of our tradition, the names of the ruffians, Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum, have been clumsily formed from the Latin language, and not from the Hebrew, to which they have no affinity whatever. All Hebrew names are significant, and have a Hebrew shape—a fact of itself conclusive upon this question. Yet, grossly improbable as the tradition is, in a well-instructed lodge, where the officers and members are expert, and thoroughly understand their duties, I have repeatedly seen the whole tragedy of the death, burial, and resurrection of the unfortunate Hiram, represented with no small share of dramatic effect. But, sir, I fancy you will be ready to exclaim—"How could men of sense ever submit to "have such absurdities palmed upon their understandings, "or how listen for a moment to such self-evident and puerile "fictions?" Perhaps a reply to this query may be found in that trait of the human character which delights in scenic representations. Statesmen and philosophers attend theatrical exhibitions, where the most absurd and preposterous scenes are enacted—scenes founded on fiction, and attended with the grossest improbabilities of time, place and circumstance. What can be more absurd than the courtship of Anne by the murderer of her husband, in Richard III? What more unlikely than the espousal of a swarthy Moor by the fair Desdemona, in Othello? What more preposterous than the character of Caliban, in the Tempest? And yet these dramas are not only attended by philosophers, but those philosophers often enter into all the pseudo-phrenzy

of the actor, and sympathetically weep over distress which they know to be feigned. The fact I take to be this. Men of information must, in all instances, know that the tradition is idle, and the tale, with all its attending circumstances, an imposture. But still, they find themselves involved in the institution, "of their own free will and accord,"—at every step they have been exhorted to works of philanthropy and benevolence,—they have been told much respecting the glory of science, the beauty of virtue, and the value of truth;—they find themselves in the midst of an agreeable social circle, and even the sham-tragedy itself, though ludicrous on sober reflection, is yet evidently intended merely to inculcate a strong lesson of FIDELITY;—the whole ceremonies, moreover, instead of exhibiting the frantic riotings of bacchannals, as many have represented, being often chastened with solemn religious associations, in a manner remarkably pleasing and picturesque. It is this aspect of the case, as I have reason to believe, that has induced thousands and tens of thousands of intellectual and virtuous men, to adhere to Masonry, notwithstanding its frivolities, and its fictions. They have found nothing hurtful in it;—if there be trifling in some portions of the ceremonies, it takes place only amongst themselves; and they concur in the sentiment of Horace, that "*dulce est desipere in loco.*" It is agreeable, moreover, as a social institution—and of great use on account of its charities.

Still, on reflection, I am free to declare my later convictions, that this degree has not been altogether harmless. There are no doubt many thousands of weak and ignorant men, who have taken the story of Hiram Abiff for solemn verity, in all its details. Such men would not stop to reflect that the 70,000 entered apprentices, and 80,000 fellow craftsmen, of whom they had been told in the lecture, were in fact not Israelites, but the slaves of the Canaanitish race, with whom, of course, Solomon and his officers held

no more communication than a southern planter does with his negroes ;—nor would they think of the absurdity of killing Hiram Abiff in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, before the temple itself was built, and where, even when it *was* built, king Solomon could not enter, but only the high priest once a year. Nor would they stop to reconcile all the other difficulties which stamp fiction on every point of the relation. When, therefore, Morgan was murdered—if such were his fate,—men thus blinded, or thus ignorant, may have supposed that they were only acting as Solomon did in respect to the imaginary Jubela, Jubelo and Jubelum, and as he would have done had he then been present, and had Morgan been in his custody. And yet, on the other hand—(for I propose to hold the balance impartially)—candor requires us to admit the application of the rule, that we ought not to argue against the *use* of a thing from its *abuse*. Addison has been universally deemed not only a moral writer, but a pious man. Yet, even from his writings, abuses have sprung. The anecdote is familiar, of a young man in London, who, not long after the publication of the tragedy of Cato, committed suicide, leaving that work, his pistol, and the following sentiment in justification of the act, upon his table :—“ What Plato said—what Cato did—and what Addison approved, *cannot be wrong*.”

It is this degree in which the grand hailing sign of distress is conferred—a sign which has been represented as being of such a potent, irresistible, and dangerous nature. Some of the Masons have inferred, that when Alexander of Macedon, according to Judas Maccabeus and Josephus, on approaching the holy city with his victorious legions, was so suddenly disarmed, on the approach of the high priest in his robes, accompanied by his pontifical retinue, to meet him, the change was wrought by the influence of Masonry—the grand hailing sign. According to the legend, the high priest and the conqueror mutually and simultaneously recognised

each other as brethren of the mystic tie. Hence, it has been argued, the sudden change of the conqueror from the belligerent to the pacific and friendly temperament. While there is no just foundation for this supposition, it is, nevertheless, a well attested fact, that numbers of American officers, during the war of our revolution, were rescued from the blazing faggots of the savages in alliance with England, by the talismanic influence of that signal. That it was ever perverted to a bad use, I have no knowledge, nor any sufficient reason to suppose.

The final charge in the master's degree, contains nothing requiring particular note. It is shorter than the charges of the preceding degrees, and directs the new made brother to inculcate universal benevolence in precept and by example ; to preserve the ancient land-marks of the order ; to correct the errors and irregularities of uninformed brethren ; to be faithful to his vows ; to recommend obedience and submission to superiors ; courtesy and affability to equals ; kindness and condescension to inferiors ; and in all respects to sustain a reputation of virtue and honor.

With great respect, I am, &c.

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## LETTER IV.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 30, 1831.

SIR,

The degree of speculative Masonry next to be considered, is that of Mark Master. It was incidentally mentioned in my last communication, that, properly speaking, there were but three degrees of ancient Masonry, although modern innovators, in this and various other countries, have increased the number to seven. But three degrees only are now allowed by law in England. In the year 1799, an act

was passed by the British parliament, entitled "An act for the suppression of societies for seditious and treasonable purposes," which prohibited the meetings, or administering the oaths, of any masonic bodies, excepting the lodges of ancient York Masons, then in existence, and comprising only three degrees. By the provisions of that act, the formation of new lodges was in effect prohibited, and those already in operation, were to be suppressed, unless they were registered under oath, and complied with certain strict legal provisions, intended to prevent their becoming dangerous to the state. On receiving this act, the Grand Lodge of Scotland issued an address to the fraternity under its jurisdiction, directing the several lodges to take effectual steps for enforcing its observance. Every lodge so observing and enforcing the law, was within six months to apply for a renewal of power to hold their meetings; and every lodge not so complying with the law, and affording evidence thereof to the grand lodge, was to be expunged from the grand roll.

The first masonic work ever printed, was that of Dr. Anderson, which I have now before me. It was published in London, in 1723, and treats of only three degrees. As this work was an authorised collection of masonic constitutions, in connexion with a fabulous and very pompous history of the institution, the profound silence observed as to all degrees above the third, or master Mason's, is very strong evidence that, one hundred and nine years ago, no other degree was in existence. The first lodge authorised in America, was in New-Jersey, in 1730, and the next in Boston, in 1733,—both under the constitutions of Anderson. In Lawrie's History of Freemasonry, and of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, an official authority, published at Edinburgh, in 1804, I find an instruction to the provincial grand master, "to inquire into the orders and degrees of Masonry practised," and "prohibiting the practising of

"any other than *St. John's Masonry*, consisting of *apprentice, fellow-craft, and master mason*, the only three degrees sanctioned by the Grand Lodge of Scotland." And the united Grand Lodges of ancient and modern Masons, in London, declared, in 1813, "*that all ancient Freemasonry is yet contained in the first three degrees.*"

It is certain, therefore, that but three degrees can be *lawfully* practised in the United Kingdom, although I have an impression that others are clandestinely conferred. The mark-master's degree, however, of which I am now about to speak, has ever been given in England, in connexion with, and as a part of, the second, or fellow-craft's degree. Such it in fact must have been; and I can divine no reason for the separation, unless it was supposed that by this multiplication of degrees, the resources of the society would be increased in a corresponding ratio. Another reason, perhaps, may also be found, applying in some instances, in the fact, that by multiplying the number of degrees, persons who valued their character, and wished their association to be select, could exclude from their intercourse in the lodge, all such persons as had been improvidently or improperly introduced into the inferior degrees. But even in this view of the case, I can perceive no cause for interposing the third degree between what were evidently, at first, two consecutive sections of the same chapter in the science. Nevertheless, it is so laid down in the books, and in the practice; and I shall "govern myself accordingly."

The charge at the opening of the lodge in this degree, is as follows:—"Wherefore, brethren, lay aside all malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed, of men, but chosen of God, and precious; ye also, as living stones, be ye built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God.

"Wherefore, also, it is contained in the scriptures, Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste to pass it over. Unto you, therefore, which believe, it is an honor; and even to those which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. Brethren, this is the will of God, that with well-doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men: love the brotherhood: fear God."\*

No fault can be found with the spirit of this exhortation, although it must be confessed, that, where the writer of the formulary, in adapting the lesson to his purpose, has deviated from the sacred text, he has not improved upon the language of the apostle. In sober earnest, however, I cannot refrain from expressing, in this place, the strong dislike I feel at any alteration or modification of the pure words of inspiration, for whatever purpose, even when such alteration may have been made from the best possible motives. There is danger in every innovation upon the sacred text.

In conferring the degree, the aid of another tradition is called forth. The story is, that the degree was instituted to enable the overseers of the work to detect impostors, on paying the wages of the fellow-craftsmen,—for which purpose every craftsman had a sign, and a mark of his own, known by the proper officer. The penalty for a detected impostor, was amputation of the right hand. It happened, on one occasion, that a young fellow-craftsman discovered in the quarries, a peculiar stone, of singular form, and beautifully wrought. Throwing away his own work, he brought this specimen up for inspection, which, being neither a square, nor an oblong square, was rejected by the overseers,

\* Vide i. Peter, chap. 2.



and thrown away among the rubbish ; the young man confessed very frankly his offence,—that of substituting another's work for his own,—but stated that he had been induced to bring up the stone only in consequence of its peculiar form and beauty. He was readily pardoned. Subsequently, when in the act of completing one of the arches of the foundation of the temple, the key-stone was found to be wanting. It had been wrought in the quarries by our grand master Hiram Abiff himself, and designated by his own mark. Search was made for the stone ; the circumstance of the young fellow-craftsman was recalled ; and the key to the arch was found where it had been cast away as worthless. In the progress of the ceremonies, all of which are enacted in a dramatic form, the master again descants upon the architectural knowledge and taste of Solomon's time, and recapitulates the history of the building the temple ; the number of workmen engaged upon it ; and the modes adopted for punishing the guilty, and rewarding the virtuous. Various passages of scripture are cited during the ceremonies, which it would be quite unnecessary to quote at length.\* They all, excepting the two last, refer to the repeated figurative, or symbolical references of the scriptures, both in the prophecies and the gospels, to the Saviour of men, as a stone, a chief corner stone, a precious stone, an elect stone, &c.,—used by the inspired writers to signify his perfection, his firmness and perpetuity, as the foundation and supporter of the whole christian church, and the work of man's redemption. The passage from Ezekiel seems only to have been introduced because of certain words analagous to the name of the degree.

The key-stone above mentioned, a pattern of which with no little inconvenience, is carried about in the moving cere-

\* Vide Rev. ii. 17. ; 2. Chron. ii. 16. ; Psalms cxviii. 22. ; Matt. xxi. 42. ; Mark xii. 10. ; Luke xx. 17. ; Acts iv. 11. ; Rev. iii. 13. ; and Ezekiel xlv. 1, 3 & 5.

monies by the candidate, contains, as I have before observed, a mark. This mark is a circle formed of certain letters—but though cabalistical, their secret meaning is not of the least use or importance to the public, and is withal entirely harmless. Every mark-master has a right to procure an engraving of these letters, upon a piece of plate, or a medal; he is to choose his own peculiar mark, which is to be engraved within the circle of letters, and never to be changed. This mark may be of use in cases of pecuniary extremity. A brother mark-master wishing to borrow a sum of money, can pledge his mark for the faithful payment thereof; and it would be disgraceful, and cost his expulsion, not to redeem it. Whenever a mark-master Mason sends his mark to a brother requesting a loan, the latter cannot return it even though it be inconvenient to make the loan; (or, even though the brother thus applied to should entertain a distrust as to the re-payment of the money,) without accompanying it with the sum of twenty-five cents, or a half shekel of silver. The reason for this last regulation is this:—The person sending for the loan, might be in distress even for food, and the small sum of twenty-five cents would always afford temporary relief—or at least a meal of victuals to the hungry. The practical illustrations which accompany this portion of the lecture, are peculiarly striking and effective. The candidate is taught how poor and needy, destitute and helpless, he may become; and in his own person he feels the dependence, which, in the hour of misfortune, may one day overtake us all; and he feels, also, the necessity of relying upon the hand of friendship and charity in the hour of trial. The representation may be pronounced puerile by those who witness the counterfeit presentments of the show-men; but I am free to confess that it impressed a lesson upon my mind, which I hope will never be effaced.

The working tools of a mark-master, are, the mallet and chisel, the explanations of which are not important. In the

brief charge to the candidate in this degree, he is exhorted to lead a pure life, that in the end he may not, like unfinished and imperfect work, be rejected and thrown aside, as unfit for that spiritual building, "that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Before closing the lodge, the parable of the laborers of the vineyard, who murmured at the good man of the house because those who came at the eleventh hour received as much wages as those who had toiled through the heat and burden of the day, is read by the master. There is a practical illustration of the parable, which imparts interest to the degree, and instruction in the application.

The fifth degree, being that of Past Master, is next in order; but as it does not profess to advance the candidate much farther in his journey in search of the grand arcanum of the order, it can be very speedily disposed of. It is called the Past Master's Degree, from the circumstance that every man must pass the chair of the master, before he can preside over a lodge of master masons. The degree is usually conferred by chapters of Royal Arch Masons; but any master mason, on being elected to preside over a lodge, is entitled to receive this degree, without placing himself within the jurisdiction of the chapter, and must receive it, before he can enter upon the discharge of his official duties. When, therefore, any Mason of three degrees only, is elected master of a lodge, a *pro. tem.* lodge of individual past masters is organized, specially, for the purpose of conferring this degree. And when a master Mason has thus received it, he is eligible to the office of master of the Grand Lodge, and thus becomes grand master. Hence, sir, you will perceive, that a man who is not in fact a high Mason, may nevertheless be dignified by a *grand* title. Such is in truth the position of a distinguished citizen of Kentucky, who is now a candidate for that exalted station which was lately filled by yourself. He has "passed the chair," but is only a Ma-

son of three degrees; and having once, many years ago, been elected as grand master of the master Masons of Kentucky, it has suited the present views of clamorous and uncandid partizans, to make the attempt of exciting the Anti-masonic prejudices against him, by proclaiming him to be "a high Mason." What measure of success will attend the unworthy effort, remains to be seen.

The chief object of this degree is to exemplify the necessity of government, and to enforce upon the minds of those who are called to govern, the importance of qualifying themselves for the skillful and efficient discharge of their duties. The ceremonies of the degree are extended to no great length; but they are such as strongly to impress upon the newly-elected master, a sense of his own deficiencies in the matter of government, and the need he has of promptness and energy in preserving the discipline of the society over which he is to preside. The process of conferring the degree—teaching by practical illustrations—is apparently grave, though withal rather amusing. After the lodge is opened upon the third degree, the master receives intelligence from without, that some sudden emergency demands his presence in another place, and he must consequently leave the chair, and resign his office. He therefore calls upon the brethren to elect a successor. Various candidates are put in nomination—all of whom appear actively to electioneer for the station. But they are successively voted down, and in the end, the unsuspecting candidate finds himself chosen master of the lodge. If he attempts to resign, it is to no purpose, and after making all the excuses he can, pleased, nevertheless, with his early popularity among the brotherhood, he ascends the chair, decorated with the jewels of the station. The old master retires, and the new one attempts to proceed with the business which is now rapidly crowded upon his attention. He knows nothing of the rules of proceeding;—the lodge becomes confused;—every effort

he makes to preserve order, but adds to the confusion ;— every member endeavors to augment his embarrassment ;— he forgets, in his own confusion, the instructions as to the method of preserving perfect silence, if nothing more, which he had a few moments before received from his predecessor ;—until, in the end, thinking he has been elected in good faith, and believing, from the conduct of the brethren, that he has suddenly become one of the most unpopular of men, whereas he had perhaps just been exulting at his popularity, he yields up his office in perfect despondency and consternation. The old master then kindly re-appears, and soon teaches him how to command order ;—for, indeed, as to obedience, it frequently happens that a scrupulous compliance with his own ignorant and inopportune mandates, has occasioned the very confusion which had appalled him. The new master is then advised to resign, whereupon he begins to comprehend the part he has been acting, and gladly escapes from the irksome situation. I shall never forget my own embarrassing exploits when first called to this trying station.

It is unquestionably true, that in the proceedings I have attempted thus briefly to describe, there is often much confusion and not a little merriment,—arising solely from the perplexity, and the ludicrous conduct, performed with sober gravity, by the candidate. I admit that the laugh, at a man thus circumstanced, may “argue want of grace ;” but the couplet must be finished in extenuation ; for “to be grave,” would “exceed all power of face.” Still, there is nothing wicked, or malicious, or riotous, in all this ; although the noise may have been misconstrued by those without the lodge, into the wild uproar of revellers. But, a single rap, at the proper moment, hushes all into instantaneous silence. Indeed there is no body or society of men on earth,—no meeting or assemblage,—under such strict, immediate, and effective control, as a lodge or chapter of Masons.

The lecture of this degree which the candidate then receives, is divided into numerous sections, and is very long. It treats of the government of the society; the disposition of rulers; and illustrates, (as we have just seen) the requisite qualifications. It includes the ceremony of opening and closing lodges in the several preceding degrees. It comprehends, also, the forms of installations and consecrations, as well in the grand, as in local lodges. Instructions are likewise given at length for laying the foundations of buildings, and for their consecration. The initiate is also particularly taught the forms of conducting the funerals of deceased brethren. It would be alike tedious and unnecessary for me to enter into details upon any of these points. All the exercises and recitations are printed at large in the various formularies extant, and so far as I have compared them, the discrepancies are few and unimportant. The charges to the master and wardens of a lodge, are appropriate, and unexceptionable. Indeed, I should feel myself bound in justice to cite a passage from the charge to the new past master, in this place, were it not for the consideration that it may possibly be more appropriately used elsewhere, before this discussion is closed.

I am, very respectfully, &c.

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## LETTER V.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 5, 1831.

SIR,

The sixth degree is that of "Most Excellent Master." It professes to be a representation, on a small scale, of the ceremony of completing the work of Solomon's temple, and its dedication. All there is of tradition connected with this

degree, is embraced in the following morccau of unauthenticated history :—" When the temple of Jerusalem was finished, and the cap-stone celebrated, with great joy, king Solomon admitted to this degree, only those who had proved themselves worthy, by their virtue, skill, and inflexible fidelity to the craft."

In opening the chapter upon this degree, the members kneel around the altar, inclining their heads downwards, with an air of solemn reverence, while the most excellent master reads that noble lyric of the royal Hebrew poet, the xxiv. Psalm. " The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," &c. During the ceremony of receiving the candidate, the cxxii. Psalm is read, commencing—" I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." After the candidate has taken the obligation imposed by the degree, the members form and march in procession, during the singing of an ode, set to appropriate music. The only additional ceremony performed while the procession is thus engaged, is the adjusting of the cap-stone in a mortice of an arch, which has been sprung across the room from the columns of Jachin and Boaz—mere temporary erections, of course. The sixth chapter of ii. Chronicles, with the first four verses of the seventh, are also introduced into this degree, containing Solomor's prayer of unexampled sublimity, at the consecration, together with the account of the resting of the cloud upon the temple, and its blazing forth with insupportable splendor before the awe-struck legions of Israel, while the glory of the Lord filled the house, and the celestial fire flashed upon the sacrificial altar.

The charge to the candidate contains little that requires special note. He is again admonished not to sacrifice his good standing by misconduct, and directed to acquire a perfect knowledge of all the preceding degrees, that he may be able to dispense light and truth to his uninformed brethren.

In closing the chapter in this degree, the members kneel around the altar as before, while that truly beautiful Psalm, the xxiii., is read by the most excellent master.

Thus, sir, have I attempted to give you a brief, but, I hope, intelligible account of my travels though six degrees of Masonry, in quest of the great secret light to which we were constantly approximating, but never destined to reach—certainly not in that effulgence which we had been led to expect, and of which the Masons were wont to boast, if not expressly by words, at least by wise and knowing looks, and airs of mysterious importance, whenever the subject became one of conversation and inquiry among the uninitiated. In saying that I was travelling “in search of the great secret light,” you will please not understand me as writing in forgetfulness of what I have asserted in a former letter. I anticipated the discovery of no astounding secret. Still, I believed with Locke, in one of his annotations upon an ancient masonic manuscript found in the Bodleian Library, in the hand-writing, as it was supposed, of Henry VI. Of the “art of keeping secrets,” mentioned in the manuscript, Locke says:—“What kind of an art this is, I can by no means imagine. But certainly such an art the Masons must have; for though, as some people suppose, they should have no secret at all; even that must be a secret, which, being discovered, would expose them to the highest ridicule; and therefore it requires the utmost caution to conceal it.”\* This was in truth about the measure of my belief. The result will appear in the sequel.

I have now arrived at the seventh degree—that of the Royal Arch. This is the principal of the four degrees conferred by a chapter, as the third degree is chiefest in the lodge of master Masons. In the first two degrees, the as-

\* The authenticity of the letter of Locke, from which I have here quoted, has been questioned latterly by some of the over-zealous Anti-masonic writers; but so far as my observation has extended, I have seen no evidence whatever of its spuriousness.



piring, and often disappointed, candidate, is continually urged on to the third, as that which will realize all his expectations, and satisfy all his desires. So, also, of the seventh, after the candidate has stepped from the lodge-room, into the court of the chapter—it is in the Royal Arch degree only, he is told, where the full fruition of light and knowledge is to be enjoyed—where the aspiring student, like another Prometheus, can, as it were, steal sacred fire from the chariot of the sun to kindle his genius, and hold converse, face to face, with immortal truth herself, in all her perfection and beauty. To quote the books of the craft, “this degree is “indescribably more august, sublime, and important, than all “which precede it; and is the summit and perfection of ancient Masonry. It impresses on our minds a belief of the “being and existence of a Supreme Deity, without beginning of days, or end of years, and reminds us of the reverence due to his holy name.” Whether it was owing to these considerations alone, or whether because of the perseverance of my companions, or because disappointed curiosity yet occupied a corner of my head or heart, I do not exactly recollect; certain it is, however, that I resolved to proceed to the end, and, if there *were* any secret, to *find* it—if any mystery to *solve* it.

In opening the chapter upon this degree, the members assemble around the altar, kneeling reverentially, as in the degree of Most Excellent Master, and joining hands, while the third chapter of 2. Thessalonians, 6—18, is read by the high priest. The ceremonies of opening having been completed, and the chapter declared in readiness for the despatch of business, the candidates for exaltation are introduced, and the work commences. The conferring of this degree occupies a long time—four or five hours, of continued action. Its traditions are as follows: The Royal Arch Mason is taught to believe, from the silence of the scriptures, at certain periods, concerning the book of the law,

and the light of tradition, rabbinical and masonic, that the world is indebted to Freemasonry for the preservation of the Mosaic dispensation, or the pentateuch. It is asserted, that, previously to the time of Ezra the scribe, who corrected, revised, and re-wrote some of the sacred books, there is no mention of more than one copy of the book of the law—namely, that written by the inspired lawgiver himself. Not a word is said in the scriptures of this book, from the commencement and during the reign of Manasseh, down to the time it was discovered, accidentally, as it would seem, in the reign of his grandson, Josiah. Hilkiyah, the high priest, had thoroughly to inspect and repair the temple, and while thus employed, as the sacred record itself informs us, he accidentally discovered an authentic copy of “the book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses,” and carried it straightway and laid it before the king. The king commanded him to read it aloud; but when Hilkiyah arrived at those passages which denounced God’s anger against idolaters, and speak of the punishments which should come both upon the people and their sovereign, in the event of his transgressing their commandments, Josiah’s horror and dismay rose to the highest pitch.\* From the whole scripture account of the finding and reading of the law, the inference is irresistible, that it had been lost—that the king, alike with the high priest, and the people, were all, in a great measure, ignorant of the book, and of its contents. Such, certainly, is the fair interpretation of the account of the transaction in the ii. Kings, and also of the copy of Ezra, as recorded in the Chronicles. Josephus corroborates this opinion, and the same view is clearly entertained by Henry, the pious and learned commentator, who says “the spring of life was shut up”—“the fountain sealed,” to Josiah; and after the discovery, he says “the things contained in the scriptures were new to Josiah.”

\* Gleig’s Hist. Bible.

It is also said this invaluable treasure was again missing from the reign of Josiah, until the days of Ezra, after the return from Babylon. Over these two dark and gloomy periods a veil is cast, which, as the masonic writers assure us, none but skilful Masons have been able to rend asunder. The prophetic eye of our grand master Solomon was of course enabled to foresee future events. He foresaw that wicked men would sway the sceptre, who would jeopard the existence of the holy law itself; and he, consequently, in the erection of the temple, provided a place of safety for the deposite of the sacred treasure, the knowledge of which was intrusted to but few. When the idolatrous Manasseh ascended the throne of Judah, to preserve the book from the rude hands of infidelity and violence, it was hidden away, and remained in its place of security until found by Hilkiah, as before related. Again, towards the close of the reign of Josiah, foreseeing the wickedness of his son and successor, and also the destruction of the temple, and the carrying away into Babylon, Huldah, the prophetess, once more secured the law in a place where it remained until the return from the captivity. It was then discovered by Ezra, Zerubabel, and their associates, on the removal of the ruins of the old temple, preparatory to the erection of the new;—an illustrated practically in the course of giving this degree. The fact of this deposite, was a masonic secret—although the Masonry of Huldah, being a female, is not properly avouched. But another branch of the tradition runs thus:—At the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, three *Masons* of the degree of most excellent master, were taken and conveyed among the captives to Babylon, where they remained until the restoration, during the reign of Cyrus of Persia. They were then liberated and permitted to return to the holy city, to assist in the rebuilding of the temple. After travelling many days over rough and rugged roads, they arrived at the outer veil of the tabernacle, or

sacred pavilion, erected near the ruins of the temple, in imitation of the tabernacle of the wilderness. This tabernacle was an oblong square, enclosed by four veils, or curtains, and divided into separate apartments, by four cross-veils, including the veil at the western entrance. The veils were guarded by armed sentinels, stationed at the place of entrance through each. At the easternmost end of the tabernacle, sat Haggai, Joshua and Zerubabel, in grand council, to examine those who applied for permission to assist in the glorious work of rebuilding the temple. The three most excellent masters before referred to, and who must have been pretty well advanced in life by this time, were, on their arrival, introduced to the grand council—accepted as sound and robust men—furnished with tools and implements, and set to work in clearing away the rubbish, preparatory to laying the foundations of the new edifice, with an injunction carefully to preserve every thing that might be discovered appearing valuable for use, or curious for examination.

When the candidate is introduced, a long prayer is read from the book of forms, or offered extemporaneously by any clergyman who may be attendance. The tedious ceremonies then commence, representing the carrying away of the captives, chained, to Babylon; the application to return and build again the holy city and the temple; the rugged roads over which they were obliged to travel, and the obstacles encountered and overcome. In the course of their labors among the ruins of the old temple, they strike upon a secret vault, into which they descend,—as the three most-excellent masters before mentioned are supposed to have done,—and among other discoveries they find a box, standing on a pedestal, curiously wrought, and overlaid with gold. This is brought up and delivered to the grand council, by whom it is opened, and is discovered to be none other than the ark of the covenant, containing the long lost book of the law,

the pot of Manna, and Aaron's rod, which "budded and "bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."\* On the lid of the box, were three mysterious characters, in a triangular form, and within is discovered a key to the same, which are found to signify the incommunicable name of the deity—Jehovah—a name which the modern Jews superstitiously decline pronouncing. From this brief—and it is a very brief abstract—the design of the degree will readily suggest itself. It is intended to inculcate a belief, that, under providence, the christian world is indebted to Freemasonry for the preservation, and discovery when lost, of the book of the law, and also the highest reverence for the name of the deity. It likewise has a direct bearing upon another tenet of Masonry, viz: that the appropriate name of God, and a knowledge of the Supreme Being, have been preserved by this institution, in every country where Masonry existed, while the rest of the world; and the people of those heathen nations where it did exist, but who were not initiated into its mysteries, were sunk in the darkness of paganism. During the process of conferring the degree, a great multitude of passages of scripture are recited, some of which are historical, while others are striking for their sublimity and beauty, deeply impressive and devotional.† The lecture which succeeds, embraces a variety of historical particulars respecting the first, and the rearing of the second temple, together with rapid glances at the history of the Jewish nation itself, from the days of Solomon to the return from the captivity—all of which must be familiar to those who read their bibles, and the next best book of Jewish history—Josephus.

\* Numb. xvii. 8—10.

† The following are the passages referred to:—Isaiah, xlii. 16. Exo. iii. 1—6. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 11—20. Ezra, i. 1—3. Exod. iii. 13—14. Psalm. cx. i. cxlii. cxliii. Exod. iv. 1—10. Haggai. ii. 1—9—23. Zech. iv. 6—10. John, i. 1—5. Deut. xxxi. 24—26. Exod. xxv. 21. Exod. xvi. 32—34. Num. xvii. 10. Heb. ix. 2—5. Amos, ix. 11. Exod. vi. 23. 2 Chron. chap. x.

As a scenic representation, this degree, when conferred within a chapter-room which is appropriately furnished, is far more splendid and effective, than either of its predecessors. The pattern of the chapter is taken from the rich pavilion-temple, erected by Moses in the wilderness. The curtains are of blue, purple and scarlet—the first being an emblem of universal friendship and benevolence; the second of harmony among brethren and everlasting truth; and the third inculcating fervency of our devotions to God, and zeal in promoting the happiness of men. The robes of the officers, of yet richer materials and more brilliant colors—that of the high priest being made after the pattern of the pontifical robes of Aaron—together with the jewels and various insignia of the order, combine, with the other fanciful decorations, to make up a very attractive pageant. And the actual adventures encountered during the work of the degree—the kindling of curiosity, and the excitement of toil and sudden vicissitudes, prevent the candidate from any close scrutiny at the time, in regard to the bearing of the circumstances represented, or the history, real or traditional, upon which the degree is founded. Subsequent reflection, on the part of intelligent and well-informed men, satisfies them very shortly, that the facts upon which the degree is founded, are too absurd to render the legend probable, could even its existence be traced back the half of a thousand years. With such, however, where there is in fact no delusion, and with whom the history and the traditions are received exactly for what they are worth, and no more, no harm can arise, as I can perceive, from these attempts to impress lessons of the moral virtues by actions and symbols addressed to the senses. But I fear that it is not so with great numbers of unenlightened and simple-minded men. Mingling these traditions with the little biblical learning they may have picked up, they are exceedingly liable to confound them altogether, and attach as much importance to

the legends of the lodge-room, as to the inspired records themselves.

In the final charge of the candidate exalted to this degree, he is told, that the rites and ceremonies developed therein, have been handed down through a chosen few, unchanged by time; and he is exhorted to regard them with the same veneration, and transmit them to his successors with the same scrupulous purity. He is again admonished as to the faithful discharge of his duties to his brethren and his creator—"the sacred source from whence all earthly comforts flow"—and is told "that having attained this degree, he has arrived at the summit and perfection of Masonry." After the charge, the companions assemble, and, kneeling again around the altar, the chapter is closed with much solemnity.

Of the history of this degree I cannot speak with desirable certainty.—It is asserted, but with how much truth I have not the means of deciding, that the first warrant was granted by Charles Edward Stuart, son of the pretender, to hold a chapter of an order called the *Scotch Jacobite*, at Arras, in France, where he had received many favors at the hands of the Masons. This chapter, it is also said, was subsequently removed to Paris, where it was called *Le Chapitre d'Arras*, and is, in fact, the original of our present Royal Arch chapter. The author of Ahiman Rezon gives the form of a royal arch prayer, which is, in truth, very pious and devotional, and speaks of the degree as existing in England, as far back as 1744, quoting a passage from Dr. Fifield D'Assigney, as authority. The author himself says he believes "the degree of royal arch to be the root, heart and marrow of Masonry."

Many of the opponents of the Masonic institution have believed, or affected to believe, that in its character and objects, it partakes largely of the nature of the Holy Vehme—the secret tribunal of Westphalia,—which figures so advan-

tageously in the wild legends of German romance, and which has been so effectively introduced in one of the later tales of the unrivalled novelist of Scotland. Others, again, and in great numbers, have not hesitated to stigmatise it as entertaining principles in common with the dreaded Illuminism which is believed to have been so potent an agent in precipitating France into the terrible revolution of 1789—'93; the influence of which has not, even to this day, ceased to be felt in Europe. But these suspicions are altogether idle and groundless. The Abbe Barruel, it is true, cites an anonymous German discourse, entitled the "Ultimate Fate of the Freemasons," which was pronounced on the breaking up of a Freemason's lodge, and in which the author gave divers reasons why the lodges should suspend their labors, "since Illuminism had intruded itself into Masonry." But the society of the Illuminati was founded by Weishaupt, at Ingolstadt, more than thirty years after the Masonic institution had been transplanted to America! It was in 1730 that Freemasonry was brought to the then colonies of America, and the society of the Illuminati was instituted in 1776. It is true, as the authors of the Conversations Lexicon state, that the constitution of the "*enlightened*," and the organization of the society, "were taken partly from the Jesuits, and partly from the Masons." But even the Abbe Barruel himself, anxious as he was to blast the reputation of Masonry, does not aver that Illuminism drew its origin from the craft, "since the fact has been made to appear"—I quote his own words—"beyond all doubt, that the founder of Illuminism only became a Mason in 1777, and was two years afterwards [almost] wholly unacquainted with its mysteries." The association of the Illuminati was founded upon the highest professions of morality and virtue. In its most flourishing condition, it is said to have numbered more than two thousand members, among whom were individuals of distinguished talents and high rank. And, however wicked



may have been the intentions of its founder, or to whatever base uses it may have been prostituted in the course of its brief existence, I think that Freemasonry cannot justly be charged with any of its abominations, even though some of its forms may have been borrowed from its printed rituals, or then unwritten, though not entirely secret, ceremonies. I mean to be understood here as speaking more particularly of ancient Freemasonry of the three first degrees only ; for the evidence of the existence, at that period, of the subsequent degrees is questionable. I have already stated that the establishment of the first lodge of Masons in this country, was in 1730. The first lodge in France, upon the same system—the English—was instituted five years earlier, and the first in Germany, five years later, viz : in 1735. The first royal arch chapter was established in America, by M. M. Hayes, a Jew, at Boston, in 1764. Hayes had been appointed inspector general of all Masonic institutions in America, by Stephen Morin, another Jew, who received his authority from the Grand Consistory of Paris, in 1761. The grand commander of the consistory, at that time, was Philip Louis Joseph, then Duke of Chartres, afterwards Duke of Orleans, and subsequently Mons. Egalite, the father of the present king of the French, and one of the most profligate of princes. This prince was high in the confidence of the French Masons, and was grand master at Lyons. He became a member of the jacobin club in Paris ; and, after sacrificing Louis XVI. and voting for his death, in the convention, was himself, within a year, borne to the scaffold, amidst the scoffs and insults of the populace. The first grand chapter in the United States, was instituted in 1797. It was two years subsequently to this period, that, by the act of the British Parliament, mentioned in a former letter, against the administration of unlawful oaths, all other than the three ancient degrees, were virtually inhibited in the three kingdoms. Of these higher degrees, as they are

given in France, Barruel says :—" After the three first degrees, they cast off all restraint,—throw aside all emblems "and allegorical figures,—and openly act upon the principle of war against Christ and his kingdom, and against "kings and their thrones." It is possible that this representation of the alarmed French ecclesiastic, may have caused the provisions of the English statute referred to. But no representation could be more unjust and scandalous, as it respects the royal arch Masons of the United States, from whatever source their degrees may have been taken.

According to the Abbe's disclosures of Scotch Freemasonry, there are several striking coincidences between the order of the Knights of St. Andrew's, and the degree of the royal arch, as described in the present letter. But his accounts of the lower degrees of ancient Masonry, are so utterly at war with the truth, as the degrees have been conferred in the United States,—such outrageous and unblushing misrepresentations, or rather fictions,—that very little confidence is to be reposed in any of his assertions. Be these things, however, as they may, the scriptural and traditional history of the degree is equally as fabulous as that of the master Mason. Even Dr. Dalcho pronounces the claim that the book of the law was preserved by the Masons, and discovered by them, as revealed in the legend, to be unsupported by "any authority, sacred or profane." Copies of the law, he says, very truly, had been multiplied. Daniel the prophet had a copy during the captivity, as also had Ezra ; and there is no doubt that many others had copies likewise.

I am, sir, very truly, yours.

## LETTER VI.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 10, 1831.

Sir,

I have already asserted my own belief, that there are but three degrees of Masonry, having any possible claims to antiquity—and even those, I shall by and bye show to be of no very ancient date.—In the minds of *all* Masons, however, ancient Masonry closes with the degree of royal arch—described in my last communication. All the subsequent degrees are admitted to be distinct from Freemasonry proper—of modern date—and of little comparative importance.

I have taken three degrees of knighthood, viz: the Red Cross, Knight of Malta, and the Templar's degree. I have likewise taken two intermediate degrees, between the royal arch and the red cross, viz: the degree of Royal Master, and that of the Select Master. Both of these are intended as additions to the masonic traditions respecting the secret vault, the loss of the master's word, by the death of the widow's son—the preservation of the book of the law, and the discovery of the same, together with the long-lost master's word, as represented in the seventh degree. I will not trespass upon your time and patience by going into the details of the ceremonies, and baseless legends, of these degrees. The first is trifling;—the second very pretty as a spectacle, and amusing in its action. The lodge is arranged with great order, and with a view to effect; and the decorations are tasteful and imposing. The design of this last mentioned degree, professedly, is to exemplify the qualities of **JUSTICE** and **MERCY**. That both are of very modern origin, there can be no doubt. Had they been framed cotermporaneous

ly with the system to which they have been attached as addenda, the royal master's degree would have been interposed between the second and third; and that of select master between the fifth and sixth.

The ineffable degrees, so called, I never would consent to take—having always entertained a horror of every thing approaching the Illuminism of infidel France and Germany. I had no knowledge of there being any connexion between them, but having at an early age perused the startling works of the Abbe Barruel and Robison, upon this subject; and having likewise, in once passing through an ineffable lodge-room, had my “young blood” frozen by the sight of the emblems—among which were an automaton head, disfigured and bloody, and a more substantial “dagger” than that which the guilty Macbeth, in his distempered imagination, “saw before him,” I had no desire to form a more intimate acquaintance with those degrees. Indeed, such was my caution upon this subject, that I did not venture even upon the first step of masonry, until I had been satisfied by the solemn assurances of a gentleman of character and great moral worth,—a gentleman who was then, and remains yet, a royal arch Mason—that there was not the remotest connexion between the institutions. The denunciations of French Masonry and Illuminism, by the Abbe, had well nigh taught me to believe, that monsters more terrible than the fabled hydra, or the serpents which destroyed Laocoon, arose from their altars. In my imagination I had beheld order, government, and religion, writhing and agonizing in the accursed folds of these dragons, and expiring by their blasting breath. The Abbe had almost convinced me that the dreams of Condorcet, the blasphemies of Voltaire, and the daggers of Robespierre, had all issued from the privacy of the lodge-room, heaping the tragic horrors of that period upon the devoted head of revolutionary France. But the assurances of my friend, a gentleman of education, and of

exemplary conduct in all the relations of society, convinced me that in Freemasonry simply, I had nothing to apprehend upon that head. With assurances from such a source, I entered the lodge; and you have my experience, in Masonry proper, before you, in the preceding letters. A compendious notice of those degrees of knighthood which I have taken, will form the subject of the present communication. And even this brief outline of these degrees, would have been entirely omitted, as having only a slight bearing upon the great object of these letters, did I not foresee that some references, to at least one of them, will be necessary before my present labors can be closed.

First in order of these three—and they are of the highest rank of all the honorary degrees,—that of the Templars being chiefest—are the Knights of the Red Cross. Why it is so called I am not able to determine, since it has no relation whatever to the religion of the cross, and is, in fact, neither taken from the old testament dispensation, nor from the new. Nor, indeed, is this chivalrous order mentioned in any Masonic book of more than fifty years old. Still, as a pastime, it is one of the most agreeable of the whole series, and is, perhaps, less objectionable than any other. It is connected, in its traditions, with the preparations of the Jews for returning from the captivity, to rebuild the temple; and the whole history may be found, almost in the terms set down in the formularies, in Josephus,\* and likewise in the Apocrypha.† After the elevation of Darius Hystaspes to the Persian throne, Zerobabel, who had been made governor of those Jews already returned from the captivity, revisited the Persian court, where, having been an old friend of Darius, he is preferred to a post of honor in the palace. Having, on some occasion, made a

\* Ant. book xii. chap. iii.

† 1. Esdras, chap. iii. and iv.

great feast for his princes, his principal courtiers, and other officers of state, the monarch, on retiring to bed, after a short slumber, awoke, and was unable again to compose himself to sleep. Falling into a conversation with the three guards of his body, he proposed three questions for a disputation on the following day—promising that the successful orator in the contest should be clothed in purple and gold; drink in golden cups; ride in all the splendor of oriental magnificence; sit by the side of the king; and be called his cousin. The questions were: which is the strongest—wine? kings? or women? and whether Truth was not stronger than either? At the appointed time all the princes and wise men being collected, the questions were discussed. The first contended for the power of wine; the second for that of women; and the third, who was Zerobabel, asserted the superior power of women; but, above all, he contended that **TRUTH** was far stronger than either—stronger than all things; it being immortal, eternal, and co-existent with the deity. The victory was awarded to Zerobabel by acclamation; and when the king commanded that he should make some request in addition to the promised reward, the Hebrew reminded his majesty of a vow he had formerly made, that in the event of his ever being called to the throne, he would rebuild Jerusalem and the temple; and restore the holy vessels taken thence by Nebuchadnezzar. The request is of course granted with alacrity. There is considerable discrepancy in the narrative, as given by Josephus, and the apocryphal writer, particularly in reference to the manner in which the scene is got up in the Persian court. Whiston, in his note upon the passage, prefers the authority of Josephus, which is followed by the Masons, while the arguments upon the questions are taken from Esdras. The enacting of the scenes, in a dramatic form, mainly constitutes the ceremonies of this degree; and when the

scenery is rich and appropriate, and the officers and members understand their parts of the play, it is susceptible of affording a pleasant entertainment. The principal interest, where there are men of intelligence present, capable of extemporaneous speaking, arises from the discussion ; as the speakers are not confined to the forms, so that the chain of argument, and the points to be illustrated, are preserved. The object aimed at in this degree, is the inculcation of the power and importance of **TRUTH**.

The order of the Knights of Malta, is usually conferred in connexion with that of the Templar—the latter being considered of far the greatest importance. It professes to be founded principally upon the shipwreck of Paul ; and the chapter of the Acts relating the particulars of that event, or the latter portion of it, is read during the ceremonies. Whether it has in reality any connexion with, or resemblance to, the order of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, subsequently known in the history of chivalry, as Knights of St. John, Knights of Rhodes, and lastly of Malta, I have no means of determining. As that order, however, was only extinguished as a military association, during the war between England and the French Republic, when the island of Malta, given them by the Emperor Charles V., after their defeat and expulsion from Rhodes by Soliman and his 300,000 Saracens, fell into the hands of the First Consul, (then on his way to Egypt,) it is possible that resemblances in certain rites and ceremonies might exist. But I must be allowed to doubt whether Raymond de Puy, were he to descend and visit a modern encampment, would recognise any of the ceremonies, which were approved and confirmed to the order by Innocent II., in 1130. Nevertheless, the masonic writers—for the Masons are the only heralds of these modern institutions of mimic chivalry—attempt to identify the orders mentioned, as one and the same—so

that, in imagination at least, the grand master of one of our little encampments, ranks with d'Aubresson, holding at bay the fierce legions of Mahomet II.

If, then, I am compelled to doubt as to the antiquity of the knights of Malta, in any thing like their present organization, how much stronger must be those doubts in respect of the Templars—an order that has been suppressed for so many centuries? The Templars were the oldest military order in the world. The principal founders of it were Hugo de Paganis, and Geoffrey, of St. Omer's, and the creation of the order was patronised by Baldwin II., king of Jerusalem, who gave them an apartment in his palace, near the temple of the holy sepulchre. Hence the name—**TEMPLARS**. According to their original constitution, they were obliged to devote themselves to the service of God, under pledges of living in perpetual chastity, poverty, and obedience. In the year 1228 of the Christian era, they had acquired stability, and the order was confirmed by the Council of Troyes—their grand master residing in Paris, after the Croises had lost the Holy Land. The order continued to increase, and by their deeds in arms, acquired great wealth and power. But as they became rich and prosperous, they were affirmed to have grown shockingly arrogant and corrupt—to say nothing of luxuriousness. Ultimately the order was suppressed, under the most terrible circumstances of infamy and severity, by Philip the Fair, of France, A. D. 1307. It is very probable that the accumulation of wealth, and the acquisition of power, brought the usual evil consequences in their train; but unprejudiced historians have well doubted the truth of the allegations brought against them by their foes. There had been a quarrel between Philip and Pope Boniface VIII., during which the monarch found himself excommunicated, and his kingdom laid under an interdict. In this controversy, the Templars espoused the cause of the Pope, while



the Knights of Malta sided with Philip. After the death of the Pope, Philip became reconciled with his successor, Boniface IX., and also with his successor Clement V. Philip now meditated revenge upon the Templars, and addressed himself to the Holy See with success. The hapless knights were hunted and seized throughout Europe, in the year above mentioned, and those who would not confess the horrible charges preferred against them, were put to death by cruel tortures. The accusations against them were—the holding of a correspondence with the Saracens,—insulting the majesty of God,—trampling upon all laws human and divine,—spitting upon the picture of the Saviour, and bowing in worship to a cat, and a wooden head gilded and crowned, &c., during the ceremonies of initiation. Many of the knights most solemnly asserted their innocence, but to no purpose,—for in 1312, the whole order was totally suppressed by the Council of Vienna, and many innocent men were put to death under the most exquisite tortures that human ingenuity and cruelty could devise. History, and romance, have alike labored to exalt, and to defame, this devoted race of men. The Abbe Barruel, and Professor Robison, have both given the fullest credence to the most atrocious of the calumnies propagated against them. Indeed, in the distempered imagination of the Abbe, no man who enters a lodge-room, after the first three degrees, can again come forth, save as a monster of impurity and crime. My own opinion is, that the Templars were, comparatively speaking, the innocent victims of the revenge and cupidity of Philip.

The historical reader will, probably, at first blush, deem the preceding sketch of the Templars' order, as uncalled for, if not out of place, in a running narrative like the present. But it seemed to me necessary to bring into view the character of the original institution, and the crimes alledged against it, in order to contrast it with the order of specula-

tive knighthood, professedly derived from it, of which I am now particularly to speak.

There is not the remotest resemblance, in any one respect, either historical or traditional ; in the design, object, or intention ; or in the manner of conferring them, between the Templar's degree, as described by the Abbe Barruel, and that conferred in the United States. There, we are informed by the credulous Abbe—to whom I refer thus frequently, because it is by him that most of the prejudices existing against the Masons before the fatal year 1826, and by the dark deed of that year revived and strengthened, have been created—there, in France, “ they admit into this “ temple with equal indifference, the Christian or the Jew, “ the Turk or the Idolater, in fine, without distinction of “ sect or religion.”\* And again, farther on, the Abbe says :— “ Many circumstances relating to this degree, made us believe, at first sight, that it was connected with *Illuminism* ; “ but on a farther examination we find it to be only a farther “ explanation of the Masonic allegory. Here, again, the “ candidate is transformed into an assassin. Here, it is no “ longer the founder of Masonry, Hiram, that is to be avenged, but it is Molay, the [last] Grand Master of the “ Knights Templars, and the person who is to fall by the “ assassin's hand, is Philip le Bel, king of France, under “ whose reign the order of the Templars was destroyed.” The Abbe labors throughout to show, that the whole design of the masonic system, is gradually to undermine the faith of the candidate in christianity,—substituting deism in its place,—until this degree is reached, when all disguise is cast aside ; and the assassin-candidate is taught, that his revenge against Philip le Bel, is now to be directed against all kings and priests. As applicable to this country it would read—against all government and religion.

\* Anti-monarchical conspiracy, chap. x.

Now, so far from this horribly wicked design being true, the Templar's degree in the United States, is founded entirely upon the christian religion. Its rites and ceremonies, deeply and powerfully affecting, are, in their representations, intimately connected with the closing scenes of that glorious plan of redemption, in which the Son of God died ignominiously, as a means, through faith in his atoning blood, of reconciling fallen man with his offended Creator. Neither the Jew, Turk, nor Infidel, can take this degree. The candidate, before he can cross the threshold of the encampment for that purpose, is obliged, under circumstances of deep solemnity, to avouch his belief that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and also, that he will even wield a sword, should it become necessary, in defence of the religion taught by him, and to the truth of which he affixed the seal of his blood. He is also required, with equal solemnity, after due time afforded for sober and secluded reflection, to avouch his innocence of any crime unrepented of, which would render him unworthy of the degree to which he aspires. Thus much, the substantial truth of which I solemnly affirm, I trust will be sufficient to repel the charge, first above quoted. As it respects the other misrepresentation, that the candidate is made to personate a revengeful assassin, which character, for the attainment of certain objects, he is required to maintain ever after, it is equally unfounded and untrue. On the contrary, with us, the candidate is made to represent a pilgrim, in pilgrim's weeds, performing a seven years pilgrimage with bread and water, staff, scrip and sandals; and while enacting this part, he is instructed in some of the most benign lessons of humanity and charity, to be found in holy writ. He, in the next stage, personates a pilgrim warrior, ready to wield his sword in defence of the christian religion; and subsequently, he represents a pilgrim penitent, visiting the holy sepulchre. In the course of the ceremonies, the account of the

apostacy of Judas is read, as recorded in the first of the Gospels,\* by way of an admonition always to persevere in the paths of honor, integrity and truth. Among the emblems, at one stage of the degree, is the Holy Bible, on which lies a human skull, representing mortality resting upon divinity ; and teaching that a faithful reliance on the promises therein revealed, will afford consolation in the gloomy hour of death, and insure inevitable happiness in the world to come. A number of very solemn and affecting lessons from the christian dispensation of the scriptures, in addition to those just cited, are read in the course of this degree.† After the reading of St. Matthew's account of the ascension, a transparency is disclosed, brilliantly representing the triumph of the Saviour over death and the grave, and his sublime flight to the regions of the skies. An appropriate hymn is sung at this stage of the exercises ; and when well performed, this splendid and awful representation of the conclusion of the hallowed sacrifice of the Redeemer of the world, is deeply imposing and affecting. The candidate is then addressed by the prelate, in language full of pathos, tenderness and devotional feeling, which cannot, and, in most cases, I venture to say, does not, fail of making a solemn impression.

Such is an outline of the character and principles of the Templar's degree, as conferred in the United States. Its foundation, it will be perceived, is in the christian religion, and its ceremonies of a nature that cannot be otherwise than of the most solemn description. There is no room for mirth or amusement in the Templar's degree ; and although some of the representations may appear unmeaning in this enlightened age, or at least fit only for the dark centuries of monkish superstition ; and although objections may be

\* Matt. xxiv. 14—25. and 36—49.

† James, i. 1—10, 26, 27. A portion of the 2d chap. of James. Matt. xxvii. 24—39. Acts i. 15—26. Matt. xxvi. 36—50. Matt. xxviii. Acts xxviii. 1—6. John's Gospel. xix. 19. John xx. 24—28.

raised by the scrupulous, against such uses of those awfully solemn and touching portions of the book of life, yet I feel myself abundantly warranted in saying, that, whatever else may be said of it, still it is not an anti-christian order. I have not gone into a minute description of all the rites and ceremonies of the degree; but have faithfully developed all the facts and principles upon which it is founded, and all the details which it is essential for the world to know. I have never mingled in more solemn assemblies, than in an encampment of Templars, engaged in conferring this degree. I have seldom heard voices more tremulous than those I have heard reciting the affecting lessons contained in its ritual; and I have seen and felt that every heart was swelling in unison. Still, I owe it in candor to add, that I have never been altogether reconciled to the conferring of it, and have felt many misgivings, respecting it. Its representations have appeared too solemn—too deeply affecting—too intimately connected with the immortal interests and destiny of man, to be handled by those of unclean lips—by any one whose piety is not of the most fervent and unquestioned description—by any one, in short, whose office it is not to minister at the altar in holy things.

When this degree was first introduced as an appendage to Masonry, I know not. The first meeting of Knights Templars in America, so far as I am informed, was held at Philadelphia, in May, 1797. Professor Robison, of Edinburgh, a Mason and a distinguished scholar, speaks of the order as “fictitious,”—in saying which he is unquestionably correct. He states that “it was formed in the lodge of the “Knights of Benevolence, at Lyons, in France, and was “considered the model of all the rest of the mimic chivalry.”

Very respectfully, yours, &c.

## LETTER VII.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 15, 1831.

SIR,

I propose in the present letter, to glance rapidly at the nature of the masonic obligations ; not, sir, for the purpose of vindicating the whole, or any part of them,—(for under my present views, the multiplication, even of legal oaths, should be avoided as far as it is practicable to do so ; while all extra judicial oaths, are always highly improper,)—but simply for the purpose of showing how those obligations have been administered, received, and understood, by virtuous and intelligent men. “Swear not at all,” is the command of Him who spake as never man spake, “neither by the heavens, for it is God’s throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay ; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil :” and although in the imperfect condition of human society, a literal compliance with this divine injunction has been deemed impracticable, yet it is a golden rule, which ought never to be transgressed when its violation can be avoided. Nay, more : any society, secret or otherwise, that administers oaths, must be dangerous to the well being of the community, if those oaths can be supposed by any one who takes them, to be of higher obligation than the laws, or if they can be so far tortured as to allow of such a construction. That the obligations of the masonic order, in some portions of our country, have been thus construed, and thus acted upon, will appear so clearly before this discussion is closed, as to render denial impossible. And this single fact, were it unsupported by any other circumstances, would, in my mind,

be sufficient to render it obligatory upon the Masons to relinquish the order.

In making the preceding admission, however, I must be allowed, in behalf of all those virtuous and intelligent citizens with whom I have formerly associated as a Mason, utterly to disclaim any and all constructions of those obligations, at variance with the laws of God or man, or which conflict with a proper discharge of all the moral, social, and religious duties of life. It is to the provisions of the obligations of the third and seventh degrees, I believe, that the greatest exceptions have been taken, and which have provoked the severest condemnation. What the precise terms of those obligations are, after the numerous publications that have been made since the developements of Morgan, it would be unnecessary for me to repeat. Indeed, it will be found that although there is a general concurrence in the provisions, very wide diversities of language have existed; and from some of the disclosures that have fallen under my observation, I am not without apprehension that serious innovations upon the established forms, have been designedly made. For the purpose of this examination, I shall adopt the obligations as they appear in Barnard's *Light on Masonry*—the more especially since the general accuracy of those obligations, as they have been given in the western lodges of this state, has been judicially established by the testimony of Masons who do not believe in the binding force of such obligations when they come in conflict with the laws.\* To sustain the other point, also—that of a wide disagreement in the phraseology of these obligations, as given in different places—I beg leave to refer you to the enclosed copies of the obligations of the seven degrees, as they were given twenty-five years since, in the lodge and chapter of an eastern city. They were copied by a friend.

\* See Appendix A.

of mine, more than twenty years ago, from the manuscript of a gentleman, who had been master of the lodge, and high priest of the chapter, and who now occupies, with distinguished ability, a high judicial station in his native state. I have this copy in my possession. The forms are the same that were used for a long series of years in the city to which I refer; and when Royal Arch Masonry was introduced into Rochester, in this state, these forms, from the identical papers before me, were then and there introduced and adopted.\* The obligation of the seventh, or Royal Arch degree, as contained in this manuscript, you will perceive is almost as widely different from that contained in Barnard's book, as the poles are asunder.

The principal objection to the Master Mason's obligation is raised with reference to that portion which is supposed to read as follows:—"Furthermore do I promise and swear, "that a Master Mason's secrets, given to me in charge as "such, shall remain as secure and inviolable in my breast as "in his own, when communicated to me, murder and treason excepted; and they left to my own election." The last seven words of this section, are, in my apprehension, an innovation. I have not been accustomed to hear the obligation so conferred; but even if I am in error upon this point, the explanations under which this, and all the other obligations are given, and the charges which follow, conclusively show, that among men of principle and sense, they have never been received as binding one Mason, under any possible circumstances, to conceal the villainy of another. The simple fact as to the taking of these obligations, is this. When the candidate is brought to the altar, he is premonished that he is about to take upon himself a solemn obligation. That obligation, he is told, will be imposed upon him in the same manner in which it has come down to them,

\* See Appendix B.



and in the same terms in which it has been taken by others. In taking it he is likewise told, that whatever may be the peculiar forms of expression or phraseology in which the obligation is given, he is expressly to understand, that nothing therein contained is to interfere with his political or religious principles ; with his duty to God ; or the laws of his country. He is also assured, that the obligation will be repeated slowly, and if, at any time, at any stage of it, he objects to any part of the oath, he is at liberty to state his objection ; and should the explanations prove unsatisfactory, he is assured that he shall be as safely conducted out of the lodge, as he was brought into it. I give these explanations as I received them, and as I have been in the habit of seeing them conferred upon others. If the practice has been different elsewhere, in the west, the class of Masons, in whose behalf I am making them, are not to blame. I know that a very different notion prevails, as to the manner of introducing a candidate ; it having been widely and industriously affirmed, that the moment the candidate crosses the threshold of a lodge-room, he is deprived of all freedom of action, and is compelled, by terror and threats, if not by positive force, to proceed. And I have been astonished, since I began this investigation, to find that Elder Barnard has himself affirmed this misrepresentation. His words are : " The reader will here learn one reason why those who enter a lodge, never come out, until they have taken the degree. The candidate is made to promise upon his honor, that he will ' conform to all the ancient established usages and customs of the fraternity ; ' hence, let him be ever so much opposed to the ceremonies of initiation, or the oath of the degree, he cannot go back, for he feels bound by his promise. Should he, however, feel constrained to violate his word, the persuasions, and, if necessary, the threats of the master and brethren, counsel him to go

"forward!"\* There is not, sir, so far as I have any knowledge of the usages of Masonry, a single syllable of truth in the passage I have here quoted. Nor do any of my masonic acquaintances hesitate to declare, their utter and entire ignorance of even a single instance wherein any such constraint was ever practised or even thought of. On the contrary, through the whole system, from the lowest to the highest degree, every step is the result of the most entire freedom of thought and action. And if a contrary practice has prevailed, it could only have been, as I have had occasion to remark before, amongst men who were capable of compassing a deliberate and atrocious murder.

But again: while the obligation is administered, the candidate supports the holy bible between his hands; and when it is completed, he is obliged solemnly to pledge himself that he receives that book as "the rule and guide of his faith and practice." The square and compasses are placed on the top of it, as it lies open upon the altar. Of these he is told, that the square is a symbolical admonition, that he is to square his actions by that book, while the compasses teach him to circumscribe his views and desires within proper limits, and keep his passions within due bounds. I care nothing for the assertion lately made, that the bible is only placed there to gull and deceive the christian, while the square and compasses are for the infidel to swear by. The fact is not so. Is it then to be believed, that men of acknowledged talents and worth in public stations, and of virtuous and frequently religious habits in the walks of private life—with the holy bible in their hands, which they are solemnly pledged to receive, as the rule and guide of their faith and practice—and under the grave and positive charge from the officer administering the obligation, that it is to be taken in strict subordination to the civil laws,—can understand that

\* Barnard's Light, p. 17.

obligation, whatever may be the peculiarities of its phraseology, as requiring them to countenance vice and criminality even by silence? Can it for a moment be supposed, that the hundreds of eminent men, whose patriotism is unquestioned, and the exercise of whose talents has helped to make up the "measure" of the nation's glory;—can it be believed, that the hundreds of eloquent divines, whose talents and virtues have shed a lustre upon the church history of our country, and who, by their walk and conversation, have, in their own lives, illustrated the beauty of holiness;—is it to be credited, that the tens of thousands of those persons ranking among the most intelligent and virtuous citizens of the most moral and enlightened people on earth;—is it, I ask, possible, that any portion of this community, can, on calm reflection, believe, that such men have oaths upon their consciences, binding them to eternal silence in regard to the guilt of any man, because he happens to be a Freemason, no matter what be the grade of offence, whether it be the picking of a pocket, or the shedding of blood? It does really seem to me impossible, that such an opinion could, at any moment, have prevailed, to any considerable extent, amongst reflecting and intelligent citizens. Yet, still, I am aware that an awful example of fact can be cited against me. And I am also aware, that the authors of the example to which I refer, have not been treated by the whole masonic fraternity with that degree of indignation and abhorrence which they justly merited. On the contrary, it is but too true, that, in some instances, ignorance and fanaticism have conspired to extend aid and comfort to those, who, with good cause, are believed to be of the guilty number. Still, however, I must protest against the construction attempted to be put upon the obligations, as being directly at variance with the interpretation always given them by those with whom I have formerly mingled in intimate fellowship among masons.

Allow me, sir, to pursue this subject of masonic secrets a little farther, since I shall probably not have a better opportunity for disclosing my entire views upon this much-discussed feature of the masonic institution. From the period at which I reached the summit of what is called ancient Masonry, I have held but one opinion in relation to masonic secrets; and in that opinion I have always found my intelligent brethren ready to concur. It was this: *That the essential secrets of Masonry, consisted in nothing more than the signs, grips, pass-words and tokens, essential to the preservation of the society from the inroads of impostors; together with certain symbolical emblems, the technical terms appertaining to which served as a sort of universal language, by which the members of the fraternity could distinguish each other, in all places and countries where lodges were instituted, and conducted like those of the United States.* Such, and such only, have I been accustomed to consider as the essential secrets of the order—secrets of not the least consequence to the world, but which were essential for the preservation of the society. All the principles, history, and traditions of the order, I have always made the subjects of free conversation, whenever it was desired. This opinion is moreover sustained by the text-books of the order. The Monitor says:—"Did the particular secrets, or peculiar forms prevalent among Masons, constitute the *essence of the art*, it might be alledged that our amusements were trifling, and our ceremonies superficial. "But this is not the case." The Rev. Salem Town, long the Grand Chaplain of the Royal Arch Chapter of this state, whose book on speculative Masonry has been sanctioned by the highest masonic officers in the country, expressly declares, that "our leading tenets are no secrets." And again, "by a full and fair exposition of our great leading principles, *we betray no secrets.*" So have I always held and acted; and I have never been able to repress a smile of

contempt, whenever I have occasionally seen the foolish brethren putting on airs of reserve and mystery, and shaking their heads with owlish gravity and wisdom, if the secrets of Freemasonry should by chance become the theme of inquiry and conversation. In regard to the grips and pass-words before mentioned, such have been common with many other societies. It is so with the celebrated Tammany Society; it has been so until very recently, with the Phi Beta Kappa, a purely literary society; and it was so with the old and much-calumniated Washington Benevolent Society. Nor in either case, so far as I am informed, has danger been apprehended merely from *the secret*.

So far as it respects the secrets of the lodge-room, in general, I have regarded them as conventional only—to be held no more sacred than the conversation at the table of a private dinner party, which every gentleman is bound in honor not publicly to repeat. It is usual when a candidate is proposed for membership of a lodge, that his habits and character be canvassed, and it would be disgraceful to betray the confidence of such discussions. In like manner, it would be a violation of faith, to state, that such or such a man had applied for membership, and been *black-balled*. In cases of applications for charity, moreover, it would be alike dishonorable and unkind, to proclaim the names of the petitioners upon the house-tops. These things, therefore, are secrets—but only conventional secrets—such as most other societies, and even boards of bank directors, must necessarily have, as well as churches, and presbyteries, and synods.

Secrecy and silence were qualities zealously cultivated, and strictly enjoined, by many philosophers of antiquity; when observed with discretion, and not illegally, they are eminently conducive to the peace and happiness of human society—the grand conservators of well regulated social intercourse;—and numerous are the occurrences within the observation of us all, tending to show that the art of preserv-

ing them inviolate, is often a desirable and laudable attainment. "A tale-bearer," says Solomon, "revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth them. Discover not a secret to another, lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away. He that keepeth his tongue, keepeth his own soul." To the same purpose we read in the book of Ecclesiasticus: "Whoever discovereth secrets, shall never find a friend to his mind. Love thy friend, and be faithful unto him; but if thou bewrayeth his secrets follow no more after him: for as a man hath destroyed his enemy, so hast thou lost the love of thy neighbor. As for a wound, it may be bound up; and after reviling, there may be reconciliation: but he that bewrayeth secrets, is without hope."—These are the words of wisdom, and my regard for the secrets of the lodge-room had ever "this extent—no more."

The foregoing expositions, like every other contained in these letters, have been made with all possible frankness and sincerity; and I trust, sir, that after reading them, you will do me the justice to believe, that should a brother Mason tell me, as a secret, that he had robbed a store, I should very speedily make the matter public in the police office; or, should he say that he had helped to murder William Morgan, I should as certainly help the civil authorities to put him in the way of being hanged. In one word, sir, no Mason is bound by any obligation, to keep the secrets of an *unworthy* brother; and whenever a Mason, knowingly and wilfully and criminally, *violates* those restraining acts which are necessary to secure the life, liberty and happiness of the citizen, he becomes unworthy of confidence, and the obligation of secrecy is cancelled by the higher obligation which rests upon every good man, to maintain **THE SUPREMACY OF THE LAWS**. Such is now, and ever has been, my construction of this feature of the masonic obligations; and, such, also, is the construction of those Masons with whom I

The clause respecting the inviolability of secrets, repeated in the passage above quoted, and also in the two preceding obligations, having already been discussed, it only remains that I note the explanation respecting the obligation to help a brother out of difficulty, whether right or wrong. The allegation respecting this feature of the obligation, is, that Masons are bound by it to rescue one another from the officers and ministers of the law ; that if a Mason is involved even in legal difficulties, his brethren are bound by their solemn oaths, to help him out—“*right or wrong.*” If he is in the custody of an officer, he is to be rescued—if arraigned at the bar, he is to be acquitted. It is not so—nor is there even the semblance of truth in the charge. The interpretation invariably given to the candidate upon this point, is simply this :—That if you find a companion Royal Arch Mason in difficulty, or in such danger as to peril his life, you are to rush to his assistance, without stopping to inquire as to who was first in the wrong, lest while you are making the inquiry, the man might be killed. But in all cases where you attempt to rescue a brother, the effort is to be directed solely to his personal safety for the time being—as in case of his having been set upon by a mob ; and it is expressly charged, that whenever officers are in pursuit, or the companion who may have commanded assistance by the sign of distress, is charged with any offence, in all cases, he is to be handed over in safety to the custody of the civil authorities. Such, I repeat, is the charge invariably given in every properly regulated chapter, upon this feature of the obligation ; and it would require a degree of stupidity not often found, so far to misunderstand such an explanation, as to warrant the construction that has been given to the passage.

But, sir, I do not desire to leave the fact resting upon my own individual assertion, that a Mason is bound, in all cases, to yield a full, unqualified, and implicit obedience to the laws. This truth is explicitly asserted and maintained in

the established formularies. I have already mentioned that, on taking the first obligation, the candidate is so instructed by the master ; and that instruction, or explanation, is enjoined upon him with each successive degree as he advances, until it would seem impossible that he should forget it. In the charge, moreover, on the first degree, the candidate is told :—“ In the state, *you are to be a quiet and peaceful subject, TRUE TO YOUR GOVERNMENT, and JUST TO YOUR COUNTRY ; YOU ARE NOT TO COUNTENANCE DISLOYALTY OR REBELLION, but patiently SUBMIT TO LEGAL AUTHORITY, and conform with cheerfulness TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH YOU LIVE.* In your outward demeanor be particularly careful to avoid censure or reproach. Let not interest, favor, or prejudice, bias your integrity, or influence you to be guilty of a dishonorable action.” But even this is not all. When the master-elect of a lodge, is installed into his office, he receives a solemn charge from the Grand Master, of which the following are the first four items :—“ 1st. You agree to be a good man and true, AND STRICTLY TO OBEY THE MORAL LAW. 2d. You agree to be a peaceable subject, AND CHEERFULLY TO CONFORM TO THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH YOU RESIDE. 3d. You promise *not to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against government, BUT PATIENTLY SUBMIT TO THE DECISIONS OF THE SUPREME LEGISLATURE.* 4th. You agree to *pay a proper respect to the civil magistrate,* “to work diligently, live creditably, and act honorably by all men.”

Upon these facts and explanations, I confidently rest the case, with respect to the points discussed in the present letter. And I do appeal, with some confidence, to you, sir, and all others who may chance to look upon these sheets, to admit, whether I have not successfully repelled the prevailing idea, that because a man has taken the masonic obligations, he is necessarily bound by those fearful oaths, in



certain emergencies, to resist the laws, to conceal the most guilty secrets, to shield evil-doers from justice,—nay, more, to participate in the foulest crimes himself! I am not disposed to deny—and if I should do so, the truth would not sustain me—that the **Masons** have taken a series of oaths—more or less, according to the progress they have made—of appalling and startling import to those who hear or read them unexplained; but I do solemnly affirm, that, with the explanations and reservations with which they have been taken by intelligent and virtuous men, so far as my observation has extended, they contain nothing which needs lie oppressively on the conscience of any man. Whatever may be the cumbrous phraseology with which they have descended to us, they are taken as being in strict subordination to the government and the laws, both of God and man. The Holy Bible is solemnly received as the **RULE AND GUIDE OF THE MASON'S FAITH AND PRACTICE**—and he pledges himself to obey the **MORAL LAW**, which is summarily comprehended in the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**. Are we, then, to be told, that obligations taken subordinately to these pledges, require us to bear false-witness, and to commit murder? The candidate is solemnly charged to discountenance **DISLOYALTY** and **REBELLION**—not to be concerned in **PLOTS** and **CONSPIRACIES**—but cheerfully to conform to the **LAWS**, and the **GOVERNMENT**, wherever he may reside, and in all cases to submit to the civil authorities;—and are we yet to be told that we are to **KEEP** the **SECRETS** of **MURDERERS** and **TRAITORS**, and **RESCUE PRISONERS** from those very **CIVIL AUTHORITIES**? And yet the public has been over and over again assured, by certain fanatical prints—for fanaticism, and prejudice, and obstinacy, in this matter, unfortunately exist on both sides—that the culprits who have undergone the penalty of the law, or who are yet in durance vile, for their concern in the Morgan business, are merely undergoing the penalty of the **CIVIL**, for their obedience to the **MASONIC LAW**! I

trust I need waste no more words in repelling the odious imputation.

Upon the subject of the masonic obligations generally, the same candor which shall govern, throughout, these dissertations, obliges me to confess, that I do not consider them by any means free from objections, even were they never to be imposed upon any person incapable of correctly understanding them. Aside from the sound objections which exist against all extra-judicial oaths, they are unnecessarily prolix, and indefensibly puerile. Indeed, long before the Morgan affair, I have more than once held conversations with some of the high masonic officers, in regard to the propriety and expediency of a thorough revision of those obligations, with a view of expurgating them of their unseemly verbiage, and unmeaning penalties.\* And but for the consideration that these proposed innovations would so far have removed the landmarks of the order as to destroy the universality of the language of the craft, and thereby render the institution useless to those brethren travelling abroad, or to those, who, by sickness, or other misfortunes, might find it necessary to appeal, when from home, to distant lodges, for assistance, I believe the proposition would have been favorably entertained.

The penalties mentioned in the several obligations, I have pronounced "unmeaning." So they must always have been; for it is not pretended that the duty of inflicting them is any where prescribed to any officer or member of the fraternity; and certainly the candidate could never inflict the whole of any one penalty upon himself. Any one, moreover, who should attempt the execution of the sentence, would alike violate the laws of God and man, to observe which he is under a yet stronger pledge than the masonic obligation.

\* In the year 1730, when Pritchard made the first disclosure of the secrets of Masonry, there were but three degrees, and but one obligation for the whole three, which was short, and comparatively inoffensive. Vide Appendix C.

The truth is, that a simple expulsion from a lodge, or chapter, with a public advertisement of the fact, is the only penalty, for any offence, which the Masons, previously to the Morgan outrage, have ever, to my knowledge, considered themselves authorized to inflict. As an illustration of this assertion, I may perhaps be excused for stating a case in point. No longer ago than the year 1824,—only two years before the Morgan outrage—I myself introduced a resolution into the Grand Chapter, requiring the High Priest of a subordinate chapter to show cause why he should not be expelled. The accusation was the same as that for which Morgan died, viz: the writing and revealing of masonic secrets. The charge was investigated, *and he was expelled*. He is yet a living witness that his throat was not cut across, nor his tongue torn out by the roots, nor his body buried in the rough sands of the sea. I am warranted, therefore, in predicating of the penalty, that it is as unmeaning as it certainly is ridiculous.

But these oaths are all wrong. Whatever might have been the fact at the time of their origin, they are now in exceedingly bad taste. The time may possibly have been, when some strong bond of union was necessary for the safe enjoyment of free political and social intercourse. But such is not the case now—especially in these United States. In like manner, the time may have been, in the ruder ages of man, when oaths were necessary for compelling the observance of the moral duties. But it is not now the fact. Perhaps, also, oaths may once have been necessary to enforce the exercise of the charities of life—although charities thus extorted, would indeed be a frigid bounty. But charity, in the present day, requires no such enforcement. There is, however, a still higher reason why these oaths should be discarded and abjured: it is the divine injunction already quoted—**SWEAR NOT AT ALL.**

I am, sir, your obedient servant.

## LETTER VIII.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 20, 1831.

SIR,

In no one particular, probably, have the votaries of speculative Masonry been more actively assailed, or with greater justice, in the estimation of the world, than in regard to the high antiquity which they claim for the order. The ridicule which the institution has been obliged to encounter in this respect, more frequently just than unjust, has arisen from various causes. Of these, the love of antiquity may be cited as first. Notwithstanding the frequent boasts of republicanism, that its citizens are free from the pride of ancestry, and that no man can "borrow merit from the dead—himself an undeserver"—and consequently that every man must be the architect of his own character and fortunes; still, the mind delights in looking back through the dim and mellow light of antiquity, for examples of wisdom and knowledge, and valor. And I honestly believe that the sturdiest republican amongst us, would not think more meanly of himself, should he be told of the existence of proofs in the herald's office, that he was lineally descended from the Talbots, or the Howards; from the Black Prince, or John of Gaunt. So with the Masons; their institution becomes more hallowed in their eyes, in proportion to the fancied remoteness of its origin. Another, and perhaps a still more efficient cause of the idle and preposterous claims to antiquity, put forth by the Masons, is found in the ignorance and credulity of a large portion of the brotherhood, who have mistaken the assertions of masonic lecturers, touching the immemorial existence of what they choose to call the

*principles of Masonry, for the institution of Masonry itself, as at present organized into lodges and chapters!* I cannot but confess, moreover, that the manner in which the writers of the masonic rituals have spoken of their claims to very remote antiquity, has been peculiarly well calculated to foster and strengthen the delusion, among uneducated men, possessing neither the time, nor the means, for adequate investigation.

Of all books to try the patience, and excite the disgust, of a sensible and intelligent reader, I would prescribe the earlier masonic historians. The wretched absurdities, and the clumsy misrepresentations, with which they abound, would scarcely be credited by a person who has never examined them, were the half to be told. The first of these writers, was James Anderson, D. D., whose book of *Masonic Constitutions*, prefaced by a history of Masonry, “collected and digested by order of the Grand Lodge in London, from the old records, faithful traditions, and lodge books,” was published in 1723. It was revised, continued, and enlarged, by John Entick, M. A., and published under the sanction of a committee of the Grand Lodge, in 1756. I have a copy of that edition now before me; and, by your permission, will illustrate the justness of the character bestowed above upon these histories. It is proper here to premise, that, in its ancient history, Masonry is used in a sense equivalent to the **LIBERAL SCIENCES**, but particularly **GEOMETRY**—and vice versa. Upon this assumption, the early masonic history dates the commencement of the masonic institution, with the beginning of time, and begins its history with the work of creation. With these explanations, I proceed to cite a few passages from Anderson and Entick:—

“All things necessary for man’s felicity were perfected  
“by the **ARCHITECT** and **GRAND MASTER** of the Universe  
“according to **GEOMETRY**, &c.”

"How ADAM exercised himself in that noble science, in his paradisaical state, does not certainly appear," but, "we cannot in any wise suppose him to have been ignorant of the liberal sciences, much less of geometry."

"Adam instructed his descendants in geometry, and the application of it to whatsoever crafts were convenient for those early times."

"Cain, with his family and adherents, being expelled from Adam's altars, and pre-instructed in the principles of *geometry* and *architecture*, forthwith built a strong city, &c. ; and called it *Dedicate*, or *Consecrate*, after the name of his eldest son Enoch ; whose race, following his example, improved themselves, not only in *geometry* and *Masonry*, but made discoveries of several other useful arts," &c.\*

"The descendants of Seth came nothing behind those of Cain, in the cultivation of *geometry* and *Masonry* : this patriarch greatly profited in those noble sciences, under the continual tuition of Adam, with whom he lived till the year of the world 930, and succeeded him then in the *grand direction* of the craft ; who, as a monument of his superior abilities, and love to posterity, foreseeing the universal desolation which would happen by fire and water, and deprive mankind of those arts and sciences already improved, raised two huge pillars, one of *brick*, the other of *stone*, and inscribed thereon an abridgement of the arts and sciences, particularly *geometry* and *Masonry*, that if the pillar of brick happened to be overthrown by the flood, that of *stone* might remain ; which Josephus tells us was

\* The readiness to receive Cain into the masonic brotherhood, certainly shows a catholic feeling amongst them. If it were not in all respects too grave and solemn a subject for a jest, we might question Cain's title to the distinction, unless it were on account of having Morganised his brother Abel !

“to be seen in his time, in the land of Siriad, by the name  
“of Seth’s, or Enoch’s pillars.”\*

The world becoming wicked—“Methuselah, with his son  
“Lamech, and grandson Noah, retired from the corrupt  
“world, and in their own peculiar family preserved the  
“good old religion of the promised Messiah pure, and also  
“the *royal art* [of Masonry,] till the flood.”

The ark is built, according to the principles of Masonry,  
and Noah, his family and the cargo are housed therein, when  
we learn that—“From these Masons, or four *grand officers*,  
“(Noah and his sons,) the whole present race of mankind  
“are descended.”

“Being all of one language and speech, it came to pass  
“as they journeyed from the *east* towards the *west*, they  
“found a plain in the land of Shinaar, and dwelt there to-  
“gether, as *Noachidae*, or sons of Noah—the first name of  
“*Masons*.”

The tower of Babel is built; an observatory on the top  
of it; the language of the builders is confounded;—and the  
people dispersed—“All which shows, that, after the disper-  
“sion, they still carried with them the knowledge of *Ma-*  
“*sonry*, and improved it to a great degree of perfection.”

“Nimrod, or Belus, the son of Cush, the eldest son of  
“Ham, and founder of the Babylonian monarchy, kept pos-  
“session of the plain, and founded the first great empire, at  
“Babylon, and became *Grand Master* of all *Masons*, after  
“the general migration.”

\* This legend of the masonic writers, continues to be cherished to this day, by all the faithful. But in citing Josephus, Anderson, and his long train of followers, forget to quote the comment of Dr. Whiston, the learned translator of the Jewish historian, upon the passage respecting the pillars in question, wherein, to say nothing of the absurdity of the supposition, that the fabled pillars could have been discovered after the fountains of the great deep had been so effectually broken up, it very satisfactorily appears that Josephus mistook Seth or Sesostris, king of Egypt, who is supposed to have erected the pillars referred to, for Seth the son of Adam.

"From Shinaar, the *science* and the *art* were carried to distant parts of the earth, notwithstanding the confusion of dialects, which gave rise to the *Mason's* faculty, and universal practice of conversing without speaking, and of knowing each other by *signs* and *tokens*."

"Mizraim, or Menes, the second son of Ham, carried to, and preserved in, Egypt, their original skill, and much cultivated the *art*." And—"The successors of Mizraim, who styled themselves the sons of ancient kings, encouraged the *royal art*, down to the last of their race, the learned king Amasis."

"The history fails in the south and west of Africa!" and the posterity of Japheth, scattering off to Scythia, Norway, Gaul, Britain, and America, lost the art—careless fellows that they were!

But—"The offspring of Shem propagated the *science* and the *art*, as far as China and Japan."

"Abraham, born two years after the death of Noah, had learned well the *science* and the *art*, before the God of Glory called him to travel from Ur, of the Chaldees," and "He communicated his great skill to the Canaanites, for which they honored him as a prince."

Isaac, Ishmael and Jacob, of course, were taught the science by their fathers. Joseph was so well instructed by his father, "that he excelled the Egyptian *Masons* in knowledge, and was installed their *Grand Master*, by the command of Pharaoh."

"Ancient Masonry recognises Melchizedeck, as one of its most venerable patrons!"\*

\* If any thing could add to the folly of this pretension, it might be found in the fact, that it is not known by mortal man who Melchizedeck was. Some believe him to have been Christ, or the Holy Ghost. Moses and Paul speak of him as a man; but all we are told of him is, that he was king of Salem, and priest of the Most High God. The Jews and Samaritans will have him to be Shem, their ancestor. The Arabians insist that he was a grand-son of Shem. Jurieu says he was Ham; and Dr. Owen claims him as a descendant of Japheth. He was a Mason, no doubt!



The Israelites practised but little Masonry in Egypt, until "they were trained up" to the building of two cities with *stone* and *brick*, for the Egyptians, "in order to make them expert *Masons*, before they possessed the promised land."

"In their peregrination through Arabia to Canaan, God was pleased to inspire their *Grand Master*, Moses, Joshua, his *Deputy G. M.*, and Aholiab, and Bezaleel, *Grand Wardens*, with wisdom of heart," &c. to build the tabernacle, &c.

"Moses excelled all *Grand Masters* before him." He ordered the more skillful to meet him, as in a *grand lodge*, near the tabernacle, in the passover week, and gave them wise *charges, regulations*, &c., though the tradition thereof has not been transmitted down to us so perfect as might have been wished."

"Joshua succeeded in the direction, with Kaleb, his *Deputy*, and Eleazer, the *High Priest*, and Phineas his son, as *Grand Wardens*."

After the conquest and settlement of the promised land—  
"The Israelites made a prodigious progress in the study of *geometry* and *architecture*, having many expert artists, in every tribe that met in *lodges*, or societies for that purpose," &c.

"The city of Tyre, Sor, or Tsor, was built by a great body of Sidonian *Masons*, from Gabala, under their *Grand Master*, and proper princes," &c.

"The Phœnicians built, in a grand and sumptuous manner, under the direction of Sanconiathon, *Grand Master* of *Masons* in that province, the famous temple of Dagon, at Gaza, and artfully supported it by two slender columns, not too big to be grasped in the arms of Samson," &c.

"In after times Ahibal, king of Tyre, repaired and beautified that city; and so did his son Hiram. Being himself

“a *Mason*, he took the direction of the craft upon himself, and became a sumptuous Grand Master,” &c.

“During all this period, the Israelites, by their vicinity to the artists of Tyre and Sidon, had great opportunity of cultivating the *royal art*, which they failed not diligently to pursue, and at last attained to a very high perfection, as well in operative *Masonry*, as in the regularity and discipline of their well-formed *lodges*, WHICH, THROUGH ALL SUCCEEDING AGES, HAVE HITHERTO SUFFERED NO CHANGE !”

These quotations have been extended farther than was really necessary for the mere exhibition of the most absurd and ridiculous specimens of the history of the order. But having commenced them, it occurred to me that it might perhaps contribute to the amusement of the reader to be furnished with a brief but genuine history of the order, from the moment when “the fiat of light was given,” to the time of the building of Solomon’s temple—comprising the first grand division of the masonic annals. That portion of the history, as above given, may be considered complete, excepting only the particular details of the *works* of the distinguished Masons mentioned, such as the building of cities, towns, towers, &c.; for every work of architecture and sculpture, during the long range of centuries, from the city of Cain, to the temple of Solomon, including the ark, the tower of Babel, the pyramids and the Sphinx, are claimed as the fruits of regular masonic organization !

Such, sir, is the early history of Freemasonry, as written in our books ; for although I have in these citations, followed Anderson and Entick, yet, with unessential variations of language, the substance is much the same, with very few exceptions, among all the masonic historians with whose works I am acquainted, down even to the lectures of the Rev. Salem Town, late Grand Chaplain to the Royal Arch Chapter of this state. Among the exceptions to which I

refer, are Lawrence Demott, author of the original Ahiman Rezon, who very happily ridicules these ancient pretensions; and Dr. Dalcho, of whom I have already spoken in a preceding letter.

Nor does this description of history close with the erection of Solomon's temple. The same veracious writers, with all possible gravity and candor, discourse to us of the Masonry of all the principal oriental nations that rose, flourished and fell, from the days of Solomon, to the decline and fall of the Roman empire. David, we are assured, was the last distinguished patron of the ancient masonic principle, previously to the regular reorganization of the institution at the building of the temple. Solomon's Masons rapidly dispersed themselves over the whole civilized world, carrying with them, in all directions, the lights and blessings of the order : and from this period, to the advent of the Messiah, and indeed long afterwards, the kings and priests, the nobles, and mighty men of the earth, are spoken of as Masons and Grand Masters, with as much familiarity, and with as little doubt or hesitancy, as we refer to the events of cotemporaneous history. We are told that all the Jewish kings of David's lineage, were Grand Masters ; all the High Priests were Masons ; " Zerubbabel, and " Joshua the High Priest, and Haggai, the prophet, were " skilled in ancient Masonry, and very distinguished patrons " of the craft." We are told of Grand Master Nebuchadnezzar, and Grand Master Seleucus Nicanor ; Grand Master Cyrus and Grand Master Cambyses ; Grand Master Ptolemy Philadelphus, (whose son was the last grand officer in Egypt ;) Grand Master Julius Cæsar, and Grand Master Constantine. Alexander, of Macedon, was expelled from the order ; but it is a well established fact, that Homer, Zoroaster, Simonides, Socrates, Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagoras and Plato, were all very expert Masons—they having visited Egypt, where the lodges were first organi-

zed by Abraham, and were admitted into the sublime mysteries by the Egyptian priests. In short, it is difficult to conceive of pretensions more absurd, or of assertions more preposterous, than those which comprise the whole matter of masonic history, until within the last two centuries; and it is no cause of marvel, that the uninitiated, when they hear these pretensions put gravely forth as facts, should treat them as vain, idle, and ridiculous.

These absurdities, however, are not believed by all the initiated. Many there are who have never heard of them; others treat them with becoming contempt; while others again, who would claim Adam and Noah, Job, Solomon and Daniel, as Masons, if pressed upon the subject, would explain their meaning to be, that these ancient gentlemen "were Masons in their hearts," and that all good men are Masons. With many Masons, however, nothing more is intended to be conveyed by speaking of particular individuals as having been Masons antecedently to the building of Solomon's temple, and the heathen philosophers subsequently, than that they possessed a knowledge of the being and existence of the one only true God.

The most sensible writer upon this subject, whom I have consulted, is Alexander Lawrie, whose history of Freemasonry was published in Edinburgh, in 1804. This work is written in an attractive style, and bears evidence of extensive research. It was published, in part, as an answer to the works of Barruel and Robison. Rejecting the antediluvian nonsense of his predecessors, and much that is post-diluvian likewise, Lawrie nevertheless falls into the common error of confounding the operative stone masonry of all ages, with the speculative Freemasonry of modern times. He believes that its formation was gradual, with the progress of civilization among the ancients, as the study of architecture advanced, and men associated together for improvement; but he admits that the first, and the only object

of the Masons, was the mutual communication of knowledge connected with their profession; and that those only could gain admittance into the order, whose labors were subsidiary to those of the architect. In process of time, the ambition of the Egyptian priests prompted them to seek and procure admission into the society: "When they had accomplished this purpose, they connected the mythology of their country, and the metaphysical speculations concerning the nature of God, and the condition of man, with an association formed for the exclusive purpose of scientific improvement, and produced that combination of science and theology, which, in after ages, formed such a conspicuous part of the principles of Freemasonry." Lawrie, in fact, supposes Masonry to have originated in Egypt; to have been transplanted thence into Greece; thence into Asia Minor, by the Ionian architects; and thence into Palestine, prior to the building of the temple. He of course reads Freemasonry in those dark mysteries of the Egyptian priests, from whom Moore has borrowed his beautiful, but *impossible* fiction of the Epicurean. He also discovers evidences of the order, in the rites and ceremonies, of the Eleusinian mysteries of the Greeks, and also in the organization and ceremonies of the Dyonisian architects.

The idea of teaching moral and religious truths by symbols, and affecting to have high mysteries in charge, may very likely have been borrowed by the Masons, from a vague knowledge of those ancient mystic associations. Thus, it is asserted, that there are masonic hieroglyphics and emblems etched upon the Egyptian obelisks. The ignorant and credulous Mason, raises his eyes in wonder at the intelligence; but the scholar, and the man of science, would reply, that if there were indeed any such emblems—of which, however, Champollion has given us no information—the Masons have doubtless adopted them from the obelisk, and not the sculptor from the Masons. Much cu-

rious information respecting these ancient mysteries, might be brought within a small compass, without travelling farther in the search than the introduction of Rollin—probably the *ultima Thule* of masonic investigation upon this point ; but the transcript would only encumber these desultory speculations. So far as my own researches have extended, I find nothing to sustain the masonic pretension, that these ancient mystics were, in any manner or form, to be viewed as cognate institutions. Pliny does indeed relate an instance in which it is said that Anaxarchus, being apprehended by somebody, in order to extort his secrets, bit his own tongue in the midst, and spit it in the tyrant's face ; choosing rather, as the legend goes, to lose that organ than to discover those secrets, which he had promised to conceal. Possibly the hint of one of our unmeaning masonic penalties, may have been borrowed from this questionable incident.

Equally difficult, in my apprehension, would be the task of finding any verisimilitude between Freemasonry and the mysteries of Ceres and Proserpine, which were borrowed from Egypt, and celebrated with so much strictness in several of the Grecian states, particularly in Attica. These mysteries were held so highly sacred, that it was believed the neglect of them would call down the divine vengeance upon the offender, who was therefore ignominiously put to death. Indeed the neglect of these mysteries was one of the charges which hastened the death of Socrates. According to the masonic writers, the christian fathers, some of them, at least, have labored to prove that the knowledge of the true God had been preserved by these mysteries ; and Warburton, after a laborious investigation, has arrived at a similar conclusion. His theory is, that those mysteries consisted of scenic representations, inculcating a belief in the Deity, and a future state of immortality. Among their emblems were those of **MORTAL LIFE** ; of **DEATH** ; and of **IMMORTAL LIFE** ; and the exhibitions of these mysteries, Aris-

tides declared to be "the most shocking and most ravishing representations." In the same way, then, that Abraham and Melchizedeck were Masons—that is to say, inasmuch as they possessed a knowledge of the Deity, if Warburton's hypothesis be correct,—in so far, and no farther, were the priests of Egypt, and the Eleusinians, Masons. The only other coincidence between these mysteries and any thing connected with Masonry, exists in reference to the Templars. With the Eleusinian initiates, as the candidates entered the temple, they purified themselves by washing their hands in holy water, and received as an admonition, that they were to come with a mind pure and undefiled, without which the cleanliness of the body would be unacceptable. Certain questions were likewise propounded to the candidates, strange sights and noises were seen and heard, vivid flashes of lightning blazed upon the eye-balls, and deafening peals of thunder broke upon the startled ear. The modern Templars do not practise the latter experiments upon the nerves of the candidates. But in the gloomy chamber of reflection; in the solemn questions indicated in a former letter; and in the ablution in pure water, as a testimony of sincerity and innocence; we have a coincidence which could scarcely have been the result of accident. Still, the similarity of course proves no ancient connexion between the institutions, since nothing could have been easier than to adjust the latter in some respects to the facts related of the former; while the designing pretender might very easily flatter himself, that the existence of a strong resemblance in the ceremonies reported of the one, and practised by the other, might, by the ignorant, be greedily received as proof of regular succession, and the common origin of both.

Comparisons have been instituted by Lawrie, and other masonic writers, between the Kasidean and Pythagorean fraternities, and the Freemasons; and very strenuous efforts have been made to connect the order with the christian era,

by strong supposed resemblances between the rites and ceremonies of Masons and the Essenes—a sect among the Jews, the origin of which is unknown, as well as the etymology of their name. They are first mentioned in the book of Maccabees, about B. C. 150 years. They lived in solitude, and had all their possessions in common. Certain examinations preceded the admission of candidates to their society. If his life had been exemplary, and if, during his noviciate, he appeared capable of curbing his conduct, and regulating his life according to the virtuous and austere maxims of their order, he was presented with a white garment, as an emblem of the purity of his heart. A solemn oath was then administered to him, that he would never divulge the secrets of the order; that he would make no innovations on the doctrines of the society; and that he would continue that honorable course of purity and virtue which he had commenced. They admitted no women into the order, and they had particular signs for recognizing each other. So great was the reserve of the members of these people, who dwelt along the western coast of the Dead Sea, like hermits, that nothing of their secrets ever escaped them, for which reason the most learned have been unable to say in what those secrets consisted. Philo says they sacrificed no living creature, and that they shunned cities. Josephus says they sent presents to the temple, but offered no sacrifices there. They had purer ideas of God than the Jews commonly entertained, a strict code of morals, and a Pythagorean manner of life. Instead of performing external rites, they devoted themselves to prayer and silent devotion, scrupulously observed the sabbath, were extremely abstinent, and healed diseases of every kind by roots and herbs. They rejected the subtleties of the Pharisees and Sadducees.\* I have spoken of this sect with greater minuteness than I should otherwise have done, because of the

\* Vide Ency. Americana, Josephus, Reinhard, Lawrie.



efforts that have been made by writers upon the subject of secret societies, especially of the German schools, to identify Freemasonry with the Essenes, and not only this, but to prove that Christ and his apostles were members of the Essene mystics, and that it was by means of secret associations that Christianity was first propagated—a supposition which finds no warrant in history, sacred or profane. Some of these writers have contended, that Jesus Christ himself was connected with the Essenes, and others that he was the founder of a secret society of his own, and that the Gnostics, the Ophites, the Basilidians, and other sects of mystics, were branches of the society thus founded by the Saviour. Among the most conspicuous of these writers, are Carl Leonhard, Reinhold, Bahrdt, and August Kestner. It is affirmed “that the whole Mosaic religion was an initiation into mysteries, the principal forms and ceremonies of which were borrowed by Moses from the secrets of the Egyptians.” This is the system of Reinhold, in his work upon Hebrew mysteries, and religious Freemasonry. It is Bahrdt, who more particularly attributes to the Saviour the plan of christianizing the world by means of a secret society; while Kestner alledges it in respect to the apostles and the christian fathers of the first century. He gives a minute account of the organization of a secret and powerful confederacy, by Clement, after the fall of Jerusalem, and the death of his instructors, Peter and Paul, which extended throughout the Roman empire. The design was to advance the sacred cause of christianity, by means of the society, the members of which were carried through the degrees of a symbolical and mystical system of instruction. In aid of the project, some of the Clementinian confederates are said, by their cunning, to have “purloined the records, and private books of the so called secret society of theologians, established by John the Evangelist; and the founder of the confederacy connected the consecrating ritual of John’s

"mysteries, with Jewish and heathen ceremonies and mystical symbols of a masonical character, and thus, after establishing a christian priesthood, ordained a mysterious worship of God, which was introduced by its missionaries and abettors into all parts of the then civilized world." On the martyrdom of Clement, his society had been extended into almost every region, and numbered a million of adherents. Domitian was aware of its existence, but could not touch it. Trajan persecuted and put many thousands of them to death. But Hadrian, being fond of the mechanic arts, the members continued to mask their societies under the guise of operative mechanics, and thus secured his favor. Antoninus Pius guarded the confederacy with great strictness, politically, but favored them in other respects. Marcus Aurelius caused himself to be initiated into their mysteries, and became their protector; Polycarp was one of the spreaders of the society;—and Kestner pretends to trace it down, noting the opposition it was from time to time fated to encounter, to the Montanistic rebellion, when it obtained a decided victory.

Reinhold's work was published in 1788. It was answered by Eichhorn, and several others, of the orthodox German schools. Among these, was the celebrated F. V. Reinhard, who, in his last enlarged edition of the "Plan of the Founder of Christianity," published in 1798, refuted the skeptic most decisively. An edition of this admirable work, has lately been published in this country, from the revised edition of Dr. Heubner, professor of theology at Wittemberg. A reply of much critical skill and learning, and of equal conclusiveness, to the work of Bahrdt, above mentioned, has also been written by professor H., and inserted in the appendix to Dr. Reinhard's "Plan." As this valuable work is now before the public, in an English dress, it would be a waste of time to add a synopsis of the facts and arguments, by which these skeptics have all been triumphantly

refuted. Nothing, indeed, can be more absurd, than the allegation both in respect to Moses, and Christ, with his apostles, and their successors. Those arguments were, in a great degree, cabalistic; and a hidden mystery was sought in the language of the Saviour, and the writers of various sacred books and epistles, which would destroy their simplicity and beauty, and indeed their whole character as a revelation of the simple word of the Creator to his creatures. Nothing could have been more foreign to the plan of Christ, than the idea of putting the hidden springs of a secret society into operation, for the execution of the purposes of his glorious mission. The Essenes were the only secret cotemporaneous society among the Jews; but we nowhere read of his visiting the district of country where these hermits lived; while, on the contrary, his whole life was one of unrestrained frankness, and his labors were of the most public character. Wherever he went, he was thronged by thousands; he was continually an object of the most jealous watchfulness on the part of the elders and rulers of the land; and he was only able occasionally to steal away, under cover of the mantle of night, into the fields, for his hours of solitary devotion. But it is idle to pursue the subject. Those who believe with the skeptics who thus audaciously attempt to connect the Saviour with societies of a masonic character, or with any secret society whatever, must, at the same time, strip him of his divinity; for, like the infidel writers who have attributed the miracles of Moses to necromancy, so in regard to Christ—his miracles have, also, by those who would invest him with the habiliments of Masonry, been declared to partake of the same nature—to have been wrought by virtue of arts and enchantments, the knowledge of which was acquired by him during his residence with his parents in Egypt, and perfected in the secret societies, after his return to Judea!

If every writer upon Masonry had exercised the candor and good sense of Dr. Dalcho, the late Grand Master of South Carolina, of whom I have spoken before, we should not have so much cause of chagrin, as must be experienced in wading through the wretched absurdities which are to be encountered in such investigations as the present. In the notes to an edition of the Ahiman Rezon, published by him, he very candidly says—"Neither Adam, nor Nimrod, nor Moses, nor Joshua, nor David, nor Solomon, nor Hiram, nor St. John the Evangelist, nor St. John the Baptist, belonged to the masonic order. It is unwise to assert more than we can prove, and to argue against probability. There is no record, sacred or profane, to induce us to believe that these holy and distinguished men were Freemasons, and our traditions do not go back to their days. To assert that they were Freemasons, may make the vulgar stare, but will rather excite the contempt than the admiration of the wise. Let Freemasons, then, give up their vain boastings, which ignorance has foisted into the order, and relinquish a fabulous antiquity, rather than sacrifice common sense." In another place, the same reverend and judicious Grand Master, speaking of the festival days of the two St. Johns, remarks:—"Why either of them should have been chosen in preference to any other day, is, perhaps, difficult to explain. I know of no connexion between these eminent servants of God, and the Freemasons. I now write as a minister of the God, to whose honor and glory my life is devoted, and to whom I must, ere long, give an account of my stewardship. I think I run no hazard of contradiction, in saying, that if these most holy men were now permitted to revisit the earth, they would greatly wonder at finding their names enrolled as patrons of an institution of which they had never heard; and there can be no question of the fact, that if they were now to apply for admission into any of our lodges, they would be

"utterly incapable of working their way in." These are plain truths, to which every enlightened Mason, if he speaks truly, will respond "Amen."

With high consideration, I am, &c.

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LETTER IX.

NEW-YORK, Jan. 8, 1832.

SIR,

In regard to the antiquity of Freemasonry proper,—I mean as it has descended to us from the English, for I deny that it has any affinity or relationship with the infidel associations of France, of any degree, whatever agency the Duke of Orleans may have had in commissioning a messenger to bring it hither,—it is exceedingly difficult to arrive at any satisfactory result. All its histories are, comparatively, of modern date, although they plunge deep into the twilight of antiquity, with as much boldness as though they had the whole Alexandrian library to cite as authorities. This absence of unwritten early history, is ascribed to an irreparable loss sustained by the lodges in 1720, by the burning of the ancient records of the order, together with a learned and elaborate historical treatise by Nicholas Stone, a curious sculptor of that day. These records were burnt by the over scrupulous members of the order, who, alarmed by the publication of constitutions, and the formularies of the craft, feared that other disclosures, jeopardizing the existence of the society, might follow. In more modern times, as will by and bye appear, it might have been my unhappy namesake, and not the manuscripts, that would have been condemned to the flames.

It was not, sir, my design, when I commenced this branch of the discussion, in my last letter, to draw very largely

from the books upon the subject,—aware, as I very well am, that few persons could hope to call your attention to any historical information, with which your mind is not already stored. Yet, as this question, *the antiquity of Masonry*, has been much debated, and as these sheets must necessarily fall under the eyes of others than yourself, I have thought it might not be altogether a waste of time to collect and throw into this popular form, such items of general information, respecting it, as I could conveniently bring together within a reasonable space. I trust that you will therefore pardon me, while I dwell somewhat longer upon this point, even though I should find it necessary to go yet further into detail.

All the encyclopædists whom I have found leisure to consult, have noticed the institution more or less at large, and several have appropriated considerable space to the subject. Dr. Rees cites Preston, a masonic historian, and Past Master of the lodge of Antiquities, largely, and with approbation. This writer supposes the introduction of Masonry into England to have been prior to the Roman invasion—that the Druids were in possession of the masonic secrets, and practised their customs, and that Cæsar and his generals were its ardent friends and supporters. After the Romans left England, the labors of the order were obstructed by the irruptions of the Picts and Scots ; but the institution revived again with the introduction of christianity, by St. Austin, who was its zealous patron. So says Preston ; but Dr. Dalcho declares the idea of Austin's coming over from Rome, as the minister of Freemasonry, to be as great an absurdity as the supposition that the book of the law owes its preservation to the Masons. The Bishop came over to England at the head of forty monks, instead of Freemasons.

The English historian, Henry, attributes the origin of the Masons in England, to the difficulty experienced, in early times, of obtaining enough men of skill, to build the

churches and monasteries of the middle ages; and that, consequently, architects and builders were favored by the Popes with indulgencies, to augment their numbers. In support of this position he quotes an author, the name of whom I have not been able to ascertain, stating that some Greek refugees, with Frenchmen, Germans and Flemings, formed a fraternity of architects, and, procuring papal bulls, ranged from nation to nation, where churches were to be built, encamped in huts by themselves, and framed regulations for their own government, according with the peculiar circumstances of their occupation, and the lives they were leading. "Masonry was restored, and some other "arts connected with it, introduced into England," says Henry, "towards the end of the seventh century, by two "clergymen, who were great travellers, and had often visited Rome, where they had gained a taste for the arts."\* This sentence, separated from the context, might be supposed to apply either to speculative or operative Masonry, as the reader might choose to construe it. But the historian proceeds to inform his reader, that the two travelling ecclesiastics were, Wilfred, Bishop of York, afterwards of Hexham, and Benedict Biscop, founder of the abbey of Weremouth. Biscop, we are told, made no fewer than six journies to Rome, collecting books, pictures, statues, and other curiosities;—then crossing over into France, he collected a number of Masons, "*and brought them over into England to "build their churches and monasteries, of stone, as they did "in Rome.*" In the same way, they sent over to France for glass-makers, &c. The historian then proceeds to give a gorgeous description of the magnificent church built by these Masons at Hexham, the ground for which was given by queen Etheldreda. A cotemporary historian quoted by Henry, describing the grandeur of this structure, conceives that the plan of it must have been inspired by the spirit of

\* Vol. 4, Lon. ed. of 1789—Chapter on the Arts.

God, such was the grandeur of the design, and the splendor of its execution. But in all this, Dr. Henry makes no allusion whatever to a regularly organized society, and evidently intends to be understood as referring to operative builders—stone masons—and nothing more. This construction is rendered still more obvious, from the manner in which the author speaks of the introduction of Masonry into Scotland. In the year 710, he informs us, in the chapter already quoted, that there was not so much as one church of stone in the kingdom, or an artist in Scotland who could build one. Naitan, king of the Picts, wrote to Ceolfred, abbot of Weremouth, entreating him to send him over some masons, to build a church of stone in his kingdom, in imitation of the Romans,—promising to dedicate the edifice, when completed, to St. Peter. Bede, who was then living in the abbey of Weremouth, states that “the reverend abbot Ceolfred granted his pious request, and sent masons according to his desire.” These, again, were operative masons; but Henry, nevertheless, was of the opinion, that the masons thus introduced into England and Scotland, were descended from the *Collegia Artificum* of the Romans, and that the masonic institution of his own times, was derived from those travelling artizans.

Chambers’s Encyclopædia, (London edition of 1781,) speaks of the institution as “a very ancient society, or body of men, so called from some extraordinary knowledge of masonry or building. They were very considerable for numbers and character, consisting principally of persons of merit and consideration.” It is, however, admitted by Chambers, to be very doubtful when the order was introduced into England. “Some,” he says, “have traced the origin of Masonry, in general, to the year 674, when the manufacture of glass was introduced. It is certain that after this time, many of the public buildings in England, in the Gothic style, were erected by men in companies,



“who, it is said, called themselves **FREE**, because they were “at liberty to work in any part of the kingdom they might “select.” Others have derived the institution of Freemasons from a combination among the masons not to work without an advance of wages, when they were summoned from several counties, by writs of Edward III., directed to the sheriffs, to assist in rebuilding and enlarging the castle, together with the church and chapel of St. George, at Windsor: accordingly, it was said that the masons agreed on signs, tokens, emblems, &c., by which they might know one another, and to assist each other against being impressed, and to avoid being compelled to work unless **FREE**, and on **THEIR OWN TERMS**. The end, thus far, appeared laudable enough;—tending only to promote social intercourse, friendship, mutual assistance, and good fellowship.

The true re-establishment of Masonry in England, says Dr. Rees, “is dated from king Athelstan; and there is still “existing an ancient lodge in York, tracing its origin to that “period. After the decease of Athelstan, the Masons were “dispersed, and remained so, until 960, when they were collected under the reign of Edgar, by St. Dunstan.” “It “again declined until the reign of Edward the Confessor, “when they were summoned to the building of Westminster “Abbey, in 1041.” From this period its history is traced with great particularity, by Dr. Rees, down to the accession of George I.—The narrative gives a rapid view of the vicissitudes of good and ill fortune which attended the progress of the institution during that period, together with the names of the whole line of Grand Masters, and distinguished patrons, both in church and state, according to the testimony of Preston—which is as doubtful as the greatest skeptic could desire.

The author of the Age of Reason, wrote a tract in connexion with the third part of that infamous work, upon the origin of Freemasonry. But notwithstanding his usual sa-

gacity, he also has suffered himself to be deceived as to its antiquity. A full disclosure of the secrets of Masonry was published by Samuel Pritchard, in 1730, who made oath to the truth of his work, before the lord mayor of London. As Masonry was then constituted, Pritchard's disclosures were as full and complete as those afterwards made under the title of "Jachin and Boaz," or the later revelations of Morgan. There was then but one obligation for the three degrees, and that was much shorter than either of those at present in use.\* Paine takes the revelations of Pritchard for his guide, and endeavors to prove that the institution was derived from the religion of the Druids, who, he says, were worshippers of the sun. He also supposes that both Masonry and the Druidical religion came from the fire worshippers, in the east. His argument, in regard to the Druidical character of Freemasonry, is founded chiefly upon the fact, that the sun is a masonic emblem; that frequent references are made to the sun in the rites and ceremonies of the lodge; that masonic edifices, are always erected "due east and west;" and that the words of the formularies—"as the sun rises in the *east*, to open and adorn the day, so does the Worshipful Master stand in the *east* to open and adorn the lodge," &c., convey the same allusion. But there is neither history nor tradition, to support the hypothesis of Paine. His premises, therefore, being false, his conclusions are equally so; and if, as he asserts, there be really a coincidence between the ceremonies of the lodges, and the rites of the Druids, the masons must have adopted them, as they are alledged to have accommodated to the same object the emblems and insignia of the Rosicrucians, which were the tools and aprons of the handicraft masons. Other writers, however, have mentioned the Druids as having practised rites and mysteries, corresponding, in some respects, with

\* Vide Appendix C.

those of the Masons. But these ceremonies were believed to have been derived from the Pythagoreans. There was a similarity between the fraternities of the Druids and the Pythagoreans, according to Henry and others, as well in their forms and mysteries, as in their religious and philosophical opinions. But this fact does not help to sustain the hypothesis of Paine.

The Encyclopædia Britannica has given a condensed, but a still better history of the society, than that of Rees, although it is very evident that, for the most part, both have drawn their information from the same identical sources. And the article "Masonry," in the 8th volume of the Encyclopædia Americana, a valuable work now in the course of publication on the basis of the German Conversations Lexicon, contains a more compact, and, on the whole, I am inclined to think, a better account than either of the works to which I have yet referred. Disregarding, as it ought, the idle traditions connecting the society with the Greek or Egyptian mysteries, or claiming its descent from the Dionysian architects, or the Pythagorean society; denying, also, and with equal justness, that it sprung from the Templars, the Jesuits, or the Rosicrucians, or even from the common corporation of masons, the last mentioned work entertains the opinion in common with Henry, that speculative Masonry, as I have just mentioned, was derived from the *Collegia Artificum* of the Romans, or societies of architects and artificers, who sprang from the *Collegia*, and were transplanted over the various countries of western Europe, in the train of their legions. There was no town, however small, and no province, however distant, visited by the Roman arms, where some of the *Collegia* did not exist, until the downfall of the empire. Many of their members were, of course, transplanted to Britain, but driven thence by the Scots and Picts, as I have already noted. Nevertheless, they still continued to flourish in other European countries, whence

they were subsequently invited to England, by Alfred and Athelstan, to assist in building their castles, abbeys and convents, and on repairing thither, received letters of protection from the Pope and the King, extending to them certain privileges, as I have already mentioned, upon other authorities. " They then united, under written constitutions, founded upon the ancient constitutions of the Roman and " Greek colleges, and the provisions of the civil law. Their " religious tenets, being often objects of suspicion to the orthodox catholics, and often differing amongst themselves, " were not allowed to obtrude in their meetings, and were " of course kept secret. Secrecy, moreover, was the character of all the corporations of the middle ages, and down " to the most recent times, the corporations of mechanics " on the European continent, had what they called 'secrets " of the craft,'—certain words, or, sometimes, absurd ceremonies, by which they pretended to know each other. To " this it must be added, that the corporations of architects " in the middle ages, were descended from the times of antiquity, so that their societies had received, in the times " when the Romans adored all gods, and listened to all philosophical systems, impressions derived from the Greek " philosophical schools, particularly the stoic, united with " some fragments of the Egyptian mysteries, and subsequently modified by notions acquired in the early times of " christianity, particularly from the Gnostics, which led to " certain doctrines and sacred ceremonies, clothed, according to the spirit of the time, in symbols, and constituting " their esoteric mysteries." In time, these masons, or architects, thus assembled in England, formed schools of the fine arts, to which many respectable artists, native and foreign, resorted for initiation. Such was their character so late as when Inigo Jones presided over the order as Grand Master.

I do not pretend, sir, nor do I wish to prove, by any of these gleanings from the books, that Freemasonry, in the manner and form of its organization during the last century, had an existence as a charitable and social institution, irrespective of any particular labor in the advancement of the arts; but that the society had a very ancient being, in England, in some form, I think cannot be doubted. All the circumstances and incidents stated of its early history, may not be true. Doubtless they are not: but still, there are facts and evidences enough, which cannot be questioned, to sustain this position. St. Alban is said to have been a great friend to the masons, and to have obtained a charter for them to hold general councils, or *assemblies*, as they were called. The wages of the operatives were at that time—about A. D. 800—a penny a day, the workmen being found. These circumstances are said to be mentioned in a manuscript written in the time of James II.—only that this latter account makes the wages of the masons to have been 3s. 6d. per diem, and that of the bearers of burdens 3d. per diem. In regard to the particular agency of St. Alban, in procuring a masonic charter, however, I confess myself rather incredulous. But I am inclined to believe that a lodge was instituted in Yorkshire, about the year 916 of the christian era. The tradition is, that the lodge was instituted at Audley, near York, by a charter from Athelstan, under the patronage of the king's brother Edwin, whose seat was at Audley. Certain it is, that there is a very ancient lodge at York, and for a long succession of years the meetings were held there, and the lodge is believed to have been continued in regular succession at that place, down even to the present day, where the original charter, written in Anglo Saxon, is yet preserved. The employment of the members of this lodge, in its early career, was the building of monasteries, abbeys and churches.

Attempts were made during the rebellion in the reign of Henry V., to inculcate the Masons as the authors of it, but without success. After Gloucester's execution, the king himself became a member of the order, and is said to have paid great attention to it. He perused and sanctioned its constitutions, and many of the nobles followed his example in favoring the society. In 1425, during the reign of Henry VI., an act was passed against the meetings of the chapters and congregations of Masons, in consequence of an alleged interference with the business and wages of laborers. The society was at that time organized under Henry Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was the Grand Master. The act was supposed to have been procured by the illiterate clergy, who were hostile to the secrecy observed by the society—believing that they had an indefeasible right to be made acquainted with all secrets, by virtue of auricular confession ; and the Masons would not confess. The Archbishop, however, had sufficient influence to prevent the execution of the law. But the Roman catholics have uniformly been the most bitter opponents of the institution in Europe, since its revival in England, and propagation from thence to the continent, about one hundred years ago. It was speedily proscribed in France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Portugal ; and in our own day, the decrees of the latter powers against it, have often been echoed in thunders from the Vatican—probably because it infringes upon the privilèges which they wish to enjoy themselves. Auricular confession is sacred. No menace nor power can extort from the priest a secret so sacredly and inviolably reposed. The catholic priest, if a true catholic, will have his throat cut across, and his tongue plucked out by the roots, before he will reveal the secrets of the confessional. But when a rival depository of secrets is created, it is quite *une autre chose*. It must be put down : it is heretical.

Elizabeth undertook to suppress the order altogether; but was diverted from her purpose. James I. patronized the lodge of Scotland, and settled a revenue of £4 Scots, to be paid by every Master Mason to a Grand Master, to be a man nobly born, or a clergyman, his appointment to be approved by the crown.

The earliest historical mention of Freemasonry, as a social society, corresponding, in several respects, with the institution of the present day, is contained in *Plot's Natural History of Staffordshire*. Dr. Plot was a learned philosopher, and an antiquary. He was a member of the Royal Society; historiographer to the king, and also, at one time, librarian and keeper of the Ashmolean Library and Museum, at Oxford. His account is so curious and instructing withal, and so important, as being, in fact, the earliest classical record of the existence of the society in this form, that I make no apology for transcribing the whole passage:—  
“They have a custom in *Staffordshire*, of admitting men  
“into the society of Freemasons, that in the *moorelands* of  
“this country seems to be of greater request than any where  
“else, though I find the custom spread, more or less, all over  
“the nation; for here I found persons of the most eminent  
“quality, that did not disdain to be of this fellowship; nor,  
“indeed need they, were it of that antiquity and honor that  
“is pretended, in a large parchment volume they have  
“amongst them, containing the history and rules of the craft  
“of Masonry, which is there deduced not only from sacred  
“writ, but profane story; particularly that it was brought  
“into England by *St. Amphibal*, and first communicated to  
“*St. Alban*, &c. Into which society, when any are admit-  
“ted, they call a meeting, (or *lodge*, as they term it in some  
“places,) which must consist at least of five or six of the  
“ancients of the order, whom the candidates present with  
“gloves, and so likewise to their wives, and entertain with

“ a collation, according to the custom of the place. This  
“ ended, they proceed to the admission of them, which chief-  
“ ly consists in the communication of certain secret signs,  
“ whereby they are known to one another all over the na-  
“ tion, by which means they have maintenance whitherever  
“ they travel ; for if any man appear, though altogether un-  
“ known, that can show any of these signs to a *fellow* of the  
“ society, whom they otherwise call an *accepted Mason*, he  
“ is obliged presently to come to him, from what company  
“ or place soever he be in ; nay, though from the top of a  
“ steeple, what hazard or inconvenience soever he run, to  
“ know his pleasure and assist him ; viz. if he want *work*, he  
“ is bound to find him some ; or, if he cannot do that, to give  
“ him money, or otherwise support him till work can be  
“ had, which is one of their articles ; and it is another, that  
“ they advise the *masters* they work for, according to the  
“ best of their skill, acquainting them with the goodness or  
“ badness of their materials ; and if they be any way out in  
“ the contrivance of the buildings, modestly to rectify them  
“ in it, that Masonry be not dishonored ; and many such like  
“ that are commonly known. But some others they have,  
“ (to which they are sworn after their fashion,) that none  
“ know but themselves, which I have reason to suspect, are  
“ much worse than these, perhaps as bad as this *History* of  
“ the *Craft* itself ; than which there is nothing I ever met  
“ with, more false or incoherent.”

This work was written about the year 1666. Thomas Ashmole, for whom the author, Dr. Plot, was sometime librarian, was likewise a philosopher, an antiquary, and a man of great learning. He was admitted to the *freedom* of the Masons' corporation, in London, in 1646. He was the last of the Rosicrucians, and was given much to the study of alchemy and astrology. Ever employed in advancing the cause of science and learning, his labors were indefatigable in procuring collections of medals, manuscripts, and



rare and valuable works, particularly upon those sciences in the study of which he took so much delight. The Freemasons have ever been anxious to claim him as one of the craft; and he speaks himself, in his private diary, under date of March 10, 1682, of receiving a summons to attend a lodge, the next day, at Masons' Hall. Under date of March 11, he gives an account of attending the lodge, and notes down the names of new members "admitted into the fellowship of the lodge." He also mentions "a noble dinner," of which he partook, "prepared at the charge of the new accepted Masons." The fact that Ashmole was a Rosicrucian—the last of the number, as it is said—may, perhaps, be taken as an evidence that there was possibly some resemblance between the ceremonies of the Masons, and those of the order of the rosy cross. As the masonic society was undergoing changes at the period of Ashmole's membership, his attachment to the mysteries of his favorite order, then extinguished, may have induced him to incorporate some of their rites and ceremonies with those of the Masons.

During the greater part of the reign of Anne, the society declined, although it was revived, or rather received a new impulse, in 1705. It was at about that time determined that the privileges of the order should not be confined to operative masons, but that persons of all trades and professions might be admitted to a participation with its mysteries. This innovation, in the reign of Queen Anne, is much to be regretted. It is known and admitted that of the arts, only one has declined, and that is *architecture*. Recent edifices may be more gorgeous and costly, but in taste and grandeur, the moderns are unquestionably far behind the architects of even the Gothic ages. This may have been owing to the encouragement formerly bestowed upon them. When a particular pursuit is greatly rewarded, either by wealth or fame, it is with almost entire certainty advanced to excellence. In feudal times,—when the little learning extant

was confined to the cells of the monks—when few could read and fewer write—when crosses, seals, and armorial bearings were substituted for the sign-manual, it cannot be surprising that the *architects*, then the most popular, envied, and “rewarded,” of operatives, should have endeavored to secure to themselves and their order a monopoly, by availing themselves of those modes of secrecy and appropriation which corresponded with the spirit of the times.

The general assembly of the Grand Lodge of York, had continued to meet as usual, even while the society was not prosperous. In the year last mentioned, there was a large convocation at York, under the direction of Sir John Tempest, and many persons of worth and character were initiated. Previously to this date, another Grand Lodge had sprung up. That of York was called the “Grand Lodge of England.” Its rival, in contradistinction, arrogated to itself the title of “Grand Lodge of *all* England.” They were on amicable terms at this time ; but difficulties at length arose which produced a breach that has never been healed.

There was also a quarrel, of long standing, between the York Masons and those of Scotland, arising from their respective claims to priority of antiquity. Even yet the differences between them are not healed in all parts of the world, as we have recently seen in the difficulties encountered by our late accomplished minister to Mexico,—Mr. Poinsett. Wherever Scots Masonry has been planted, its members affect to despise the English, and will not listen to the prior claims of the latter. But in Scotland, as in England, the early history of *speculative*, is confounded with *operative* Masonry. Their earliest date is 710, at which period, as I have already cited from Dr. Henry, their king sent over to England for masons to build *stone* churches. They claim their actual descent, as corporate or organized bodies from the lodge of Kilwinning. Their trade was organized by

corporation, in common with other trades in Scotland, for the purpose of raising funds for the support of their poor, sometime between the years 1520 and 1560. About the year 1645, William St. Clair, lord of Roslin, was authorised by the trade, to purchase and obtain from the king, "liberty, freedom and jurisdiction over them, and their successors, in all times coming, as their patron and judge." The grant was signed by William Shaw, master of the work; Thomas Wier, mason, of Edinburgh; and Thomas Robertson, warden of the lodge of Dumfermline and St. Andrews, "*with our hands laid on the pen, by the notary, at our command, because we cannot write.*" The masonic courts continued to be held at Kilwinning under the direction of the Sinclairs of Roslin, until the year 1736—that is to say, for the period of 106 years—during which time, as Lawrie informs us, Masonry flourished, and many charters and constitutions were granted. At the last mentioned period, the earl of St. Clair resigned, and renounced his right and title, by virtue of the grant of 1630, to the office of "patron, protector, judge or master, of the Masons in Scotland." A Grand Lodge was then organized, and the earl was immediately chosen Grand Master. Speculative Masonry was then engrafted upon the order, and from that period Freemasonry, as it is now universally understood, is to be dated in Scotland. Kilwinning, however, continued to grant charters, and gave the Grand Lodge some trouble, as the York Masons did in the sister island.

But to return to England. At the moment of turning my attention to the masonic history of Scotland, I had arrived at a distinguishing landmark in its English history. I refer to the memorable year of 1717, and the celebrated meeting at the apple-tree tavern, of which so much has been said by the Anti-masonic writers.

In the rapid glance I have taken of its antecedent history, I have aimed at touching only a few of its most pro-

minent features,—purposely omitting all unnecessary details respecting the names of the kings, and prelates, and nobles, and eminent artists, who are claimed to have been its patrons and Grand Masters, as well as of the different eras during which the society was in prosperous or adverse circumstances. It is of little importance to the subject of the present inquiry, whether the society was depressed during the wars of the roses, or whether, after a long and lingering existence, it rose with the accession of the House of Brunswick. Suffice it to say, that, whatever were the vicissitudes it experienced, or whoever were its officers and patrons, the Masonry of that period was a very different affair from what it is now ; for it was only in this same year of 1717, that it received its existing “ form and pressure.” After its renovation in the reign of Anne, the society had again declined, until there were but four lodges existing, in which the ancient symbols and usages were preserved. A meeting of members was held at the appletree tavern, in London, at which it was resolved to change the essential characteristics of the society, by relinquishing it as a school of architecture, and moulding it into an association of brotherly love and truth. The constitutions were remodelled in 1721, upon the basis of that of York ; and in 1723, its charitable character was imparted to it by the Duke of Buccleugh, who first suggested the raising of funds for the relief of distressed Masons. It is not contended, however, that at the before mentioned meeting of the four lodges, in London, in 1717, to resuscitate and reorganize the order, it at once assumed the form in which it has since been handed down. Its rites, and its mysteries, its ceremonies, and its legends, had been gradually accumulating. But the account which, in his candor, Lawrence Dermott, secretary of the London Grand Lodge, and author of the original Ahiman Rezon, gives of the resuscitation, shows that there

was a necessity for it, to keep the order from speedy extinction. He states, that, at the time mentioned, 1717, some jolly companions of the fellow craft, met together, and resolved to form a lodge for themselves, endeavoring to recollect, by conversation with each other, what had formerly been dictated to them, and when they could not recollect, they substituted something of their own, for the forgotten matter. There was not one among them who could remember or perform the master's part, and they created it anew. Some of the brethren objected to the continuance of the aprons ; but the older members insisted that they should be retained, since they were about the only signs of Masonry then remaining among them. Such, says Dermott, was the beginning of modern Masonry.

The earliest masonic procession took place in London, at the installation of the Duke of Richmond as Grand Master, June 24, 1724. They were now called "*Free and Accepted* Masons." Why they were called *free*, we have seen, in the freedom, compared with other trades, which the earlier members of the craft enjoyed by virtue of indulgences from the popes, and privileges granted them by the kings. They were called *accepted* Masons, because, though not Masons in fact, they were, nevertheless, accepted as such. The boasted *mysteries* of the order, originally meant no more than the mysteries of any other trade. The "*art and mystery*" of every trade, was a customary form of expression, and is yet preserved in the indentures of apprentices to every species of handicraft workmanship.

From this period, the institution has spread itself rapidly over every part of the world where the English have formed intercourse. Into the United States, then the British colonies, it was readily transplanted, as well as into the contiguous nations of Europe, although the Roman Catholic Sec, and the absolute monarchs of Spain and Russia, have

ever been strongly averse to it, and have made frequent efforts for its extirpation. Travelling lodges have often accompanied the British and French armies, and were frequently held in the American army of the revolution. Some of the chiefs of the North American Indians, were created Masons by the English ; and the British residents at Cairo, as I have recently been informed by a valued friend, who has a personal knowledge of the fact, have imparted their masonic wisdom to the Sheiks and principal Arabs. Into India, the order was introduced as early as 1770. In 1779, Omrah Bahauder, the eldest son of a distinguished nabob, was made a Mason in the lodge of Trinchinopoly. The news having been transmitted to the Grand Lodge in England, officially, a letter of congratulation was sent to him, by a noble hand. It was answered by a letter written by the young nabob, upon vellum, in the Persian character, and enveloped in gold cloth. This letter has been framed and hung up among the decorations of the lodge. But the more the order has been extended, the less intimate has become the connexion of the lodges ; secessions have taken place ; new systems have been established ; rivalry has often occurred ; to the first three degrees of apprentice, companion, and master, additional ones have been added ; until, in fact, it would be a difficult matter to give a general character of Masons, in various states and countries ;—so numerous are their lodges ; so dissimilar their degrees, and so various their characters.

There can be no necessity, however, for continuing these historical sketches, in their particular incidents, through the last fifty years ; during which period, English Masonry has in all places where it existed, been much the same. Allow me, therefore, to draw this branch of my subject to a close.

I have the honor, sir, to remain,

Very respectfully, yours, &c.

## LETTER X.

NEW-YORK, Jan. 20, 1832.

SIR,

Freemasonry has enough to answer for, without being in anywise burdened with false accusations, the offspring of ignorance, or prejudice ; or of wilful calumny. I must therefore crave your indulgence, sir, for a short time, before closing this first branch of these investigations, while I repel one of the most serious charges that have been preferred against it. I mean that of christian infidelity. This is an accusation I have often heard made, as well before, as since, the fatal occurrence which has caused the particular excitement against the masonic order. And when combating the calumny, as I have frequently done, it has often been gravely asserted, by intelligent men, and even by learned divines, that all its emblems had been artfully devised, by wicked men, in forms leaving them susceptible, at one and the same time, of double significations ; and all its language, in the same manner, by some hidden cabalistic arrangement, made to bear a double interpretation ;—so that, while in the apprehension of virtuous men, the apparent explanations and readings, inculcated principles of the strictest morality, and the most beautiful precepts of charity, in their true meaning, they were, in reality, nothing less than the darkest and most impious lessons of infidelity. But, notwithstanding the fact, that many disbelievers in the doctrines of the christian religion, have unfortunately been admitted as members ; notwithstanding the laxity of morals on the part of others ; and notwithstanding, also, the objectionable forms of the obligations, the charge is unqualified-

ly, and in all respects, untrue. Indeed, so utterly unfounded is the accusation, and so directly to the contrary is the fact, with respect to every degree with which I am acquainted, that I cannot but flatter myself its falsity has been rendered evident in the course of the preceding expositions,—none of which, by the way, have hitherto been written with immediate reference to this point of the discussion. The idea of the double readings, and the double and directly opposite interpretations of the emblems and symbols used in the working of the lodges, is too preposterous to require a grave refutation. And if I had not actually heard the objection seriously made, and its truth as seriously contended for, by reverend divines of no ordinary reputation, I should have supposed it must require an uncommon degree of credulity in any one, to believe even in the existence of such an opinion. The thing is in itself impossible.

Nor do I apprehend it will appear very probable, in the eyes of most men, that in the very first step of an infidel institution, the initiate would be presented with the bible, as translated “by order of the most high and mighty prince “James,” with a pledge that he receives it as the “rule and “guide of his faith and practice.” The bible is accompanied by the square and compasses, and the charge is in the following words:—“The *Holy Writings*, that great light in “Masonry, will guide you to all truth; it will direct your “path to the temple of happiness, and point out to you the “whole duty of man. The *square* teaches us to regulate “our actions by rule and line, and to harmonize our conduct “by the principles of morality and virtue. The *compasses* “teach us, properly, to circumscribe our views and desires “in every station; that rising thus to eminence by merit, “we may live respected, and die regretted.” Really, sir, it strikes me, that it would be a most extraordinary procedure, for a club of infidels, to attempt building up and sustaining a perpetual association of infidel men, upon such a founda-



tion. The BIBLE!—the book of books,—the lively oracles of the Most High,—the revelation of his will to man,—the humble christian's richest treasure,—containing, as it does, those divine rules of conduct, and those precious promises, on which alone he builds his hopes of a blessed immortality, in a world of light, and life, and glory:—The BIBLE!—the object of the infidel's scorn and dread,—containing as it does, the awful threatenings of God's vengeance upon the evil-doers:—surely it will not be contended that SUCH A BOOK has been selected as the basis of a society of unbelievers! Had it, on the contrary, been "*The Age of Reason*," which the speculative Mason received as the ground-work of his religion, and the basis of his morals; and had the blasphemies of Voltaire and Lalande been prescribed as their textbooks, instead of the moral lessons and allegories of which I have spoken in the preceding letters, the case would have been far different—but scarcely worse than it has been represented.

Again: not only has the institution been charged with infidelity in general,—that is, with a universal disbelief in things holy and sacred,—but the specific charge of *Deism*, and a disbelief in the divine mission of the *Saviour of Men*, has been predicated of the order, by those, who, probably, would not be quite so uncharitable as to accuse it of downright Atheism. But, here again, I stand ready to meet our accusers at the threshold, and plead the general issue. I have already, in the exposition of the Templar's degree, shown that in the orders of knighthood, a belief in the Saviour, is an essential pre-requisite; and, consequently, that neither Jew, Turk, nor infidel, can become participators in those degrees.

It is true, however, that from the circumstance that what is called ancient Masonry, is derived from traditions and historical incidents, supposed to be connected with the old testament dispensation, the belief in the identity of God the

Father and the Son, is not specifically required ; yet the symbols and emblems of every degree, from the first to the seventh inclusive, point to, and distinctly indicate, a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. Among these emblems, in the very first degree, is the blazing **STAR**, in commemoration of the **STAR IN THE EAST**, which appeared to guide the wise men to the place of the nativity of the Messiah. In former times, lodges and chapters were dedicated to king Solomon ; but latterly, they have been dedicated, either to John the Baptist, or the Evangelist, "*because they were christians.*"\* And although in the general lectures upon the lower orders, it has been usual to charge the initiates, as they proceeded from step to step, to adhere to those *essentials* of religion in which all men agree—leaving each individual to exercise his own private judgment as to creeds and forms,—yet it is expressly enjoined in the lecture on the "temper and "qualities requisite in those who would be Freemasons," that they "cannot tread in the irreligious paths of the unhappy **LIBERTINE**, the **DEIST**, or the stupid **ATHEIST**." Nor is this all : in the first prayer of the first degree, the aid of the Almighty is invoked, that the candidate "may devote "his life to **HIS** service," that he may be the better "enabled to display the beauties of virtuousness to the honor of "**THY** holy name." Another prayer for the same degree, has the following passages :—"Most holy and glorious God ! "the great architect of the universe ; the giver of all good "gifts and graces ; thou hast promised that 'where two or " 'three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt be in " 'the midst of them and bless them.' " And "we beseech "thee, O Lord God, to illumine our minds through the influence of the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, that we may walk "in the light of thy countenance," &c. One of the prayers for the opening of the Royal Arch degree, concludes in

\* Vide Ahiman Rezon, New-York ed., 1804.

these words:—"This we most humbly beg, **IN THE NAME "AND FOR THE SAKE OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR."** In another place, the Saviour is recognized in the significant title applied to him by the prophet Dàniel—"THE ANCIENT OF DAYS."\* In short, sir, I might multiply proofs and authorities, of the same description, to an indefinite extent. But I imagine that enough has been said upon this point. If the facts here stated, do not amply vindicate the order from the accusations to which I have adverted, I must confess my lack of knowledge as to what would be considered competent testimony, and my want of ability to execute the task. But in any event, however much the institution may have been corrupted by bad, or misunderstood or misused by ignorant men, I trust I have succeeded in showing, that good and pious men may very well have joined the order, and retained their standing as members, during their whole lives, without compromising their religious faith and principles, "though founded upon the prophets and apostles, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief corner stone." I know that many such have been its members, and that many such even yet continue attached to the order, though I hope they will shortly be persuaded to relinquish it. They have been instructed "to practice *out of* the lodge, those duties which they have been taught *within* it;" they have labored by their amiable, discreet, and virtuous conduct, to convince others of the goodness of the institution—believing it to be one in which the burthened heart might pour out its sorrows to their brethren; to which distress might prefer its suit; whose hands were

\* And yet the Rev. Joel Parker, late of Rochester, and now of the city of New-York, has certified in a letter, and stated from the pulpit, in a sermon which has been printed, that "the religious worship of masonry is purely *theistical*." "Freemasonry," he says, "makes many prayers, but they are prayers offered up without the acknowledgment of a Saviour." The reverend gentleman could never have attended properly instructed masonic bodies, or his memory has been treacherous; or, he could never have investigated the subject.

guided by justice, and the hearts of whose members were expanding with benevolence. These, having received the holy scriptures as "the rule and guide of their faith and "practice," have endeavored to acquit themselves with reputation and honor, and sought to lay up for themselves a crown of rejoicing which would endure when time shall be no more.\* To these individuals, of pure and honest motives,—of worthy and honorable conduct,—whose charity "white as the angel's wing," thinketh no evil,—it may seem marvellous that I add my conviction, that, notwithstanding all which can be said in favor of the order, by the most unprejudiced and impartial men ;—that, although I do not believe the principles of the institution to be of themselves immoral or irreligious ;—that, although I do not believe it was ever contemplated that the laws and obligations of Masonry should come into collision with the laws of the land ;—that, although I do not believe the great body of the Freemasons of our country, had any previous knowledge of, or participation in, the great masonic crime of the west ;—and that, although I do not believe that the Morgan conspirators have any of them been tried or punished for deeds which they were compelled by the terms or tenor of the laws of Masonry to commit ;—yet, I say, notwithstanding all these considerations, and maugre all that can be said in its favor, I am fully persuaded, after much examination and reflection, that, upon its own merits, and independently altogether of the events that have transpired since the summer of 1826, **THE ORDER OF SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY OUGHT FOREVER TO BE RELINQUISHED.** To this conclusion I have arrived from the following considerations, among a variety of others that might be enumerated, viz :—

I. The main superstructure, in its history and traditions, and its pretensions, (in its present organization,) to antiquity,

\* Vide charge to the master, at the installation of a lodge.

is founded, to a very considerable degree, in fraud and imposture :—

II. Its rites and ceremonies are puerile and frivolous,—altogether beneath the dignity, and unworthy of the attention, of enlightened and educated men : it is vastly behind the age :—

III. From its inutility : At the present period, when knowledge and civilization have taught the nerves to vibrate to the touch of sympathy, and when the diffusion of christianity has so widely cultivated the graces of philanthropy and benevolence, men do not require an accumulation of barbarously-constructed oaths, to compel them to practise the social duties, and the moral and charitable virtues :—

IV. From its inutility in another respect : In an age and country like this, where the freedom of speech is unchecked ; where opinion is as free as the air we breathe, and where all are dwelling in the broad blaze of religious light, symbolic representations, and allegorical emblems, can be of little use in imparting ethical instruction, or the science of theology, to adults, of either sex :—

V. Its legality may well be questioned : All extra-judicial oaths are uncalled for, and improper, if not contrary to the spirit of the civil laws. The divine command is—“ SWEAR NOT AT ALL ” :—

VI. Attendance upon its calls and its duties, occasions a great waste of time. No instruction is given in the lodge-room, now-a-days, whatever may have been the fact in times past, either in literature ; or in the arts ; or in the exact sciences. The frequent meetings of lodges, which are generally connected with public houses, is very liable, moreover, to beget idleness and dissipation, especially among the weaker brethren :—

VII. There is a growing jealousy among the people, of secret societies, their character and influence ; and there

have been more reasons than one, to warrant that jealousy :—

VIII. If the institution has been abused,—if evils have resulted from it,—the same abuses, and the like evils, may proceed from it again.

These reasons, to my mind, are abundantly sufficient to sustain my proposition : but, if there be any who think otherwise, there are other reasons at hand, of infinitely higher moment, not only rendering such a measure proper in itself, but DEMANDING the DISSOLUTION of the INSTITUTION in a voice POTENT AS THUNDER. This fact, as I trust, will be made most satisfactorily to appear, in the history that is to follow.

With respectful consideration, I am, &c.

## LETTER XI.

NEW-YORK, Jan. 25, 1832.

SIR,

In the pleasant and flourishing village of Batavia, the shire town of Genesee county, in this state, resided, in the years 1825-'26, a man by the name of WILLIAM MORGAN. Perhaps it would be more proper to speak of him as "a sojourner" in Batavia, "and the region round about," rather than as a permanent resident. As this William Morgan was the victim of the dark tragedy which is to form the subject of the following narrative, and is certainly destined to live in history, for a length of time little anticipated by those who most foully made way with him, some preliminary account of his life and character may naturally be expected. I have exerted myself not a little to procure information upon both points. Of the former, however, little can be ascertained. Respecting the latter, more

can be said than will do good to his memory. But I shall "drag his frailties from their dread abode," no farther than is necessary to the just and impartial accomplishment of the present history.

Morgan's last place of residence, previously to his appearance in Genesee county—for it was in Le Roy, a village some twelve or fifteen miles distant from Batavia, that he first made a halt—was Rochester. He was a native of Culpepper county, Va., where he was born in 1775 or 1776. Of his life, down to the time of his appearance in Rochester, as I have already intimated, but little is known. Many stories have been put into circulation respecting him, as well by those who have thought it expedient to apotheosize him for the advancement of their political purposes, as by those other individuals, who may have supposed that his blood would leave a lighter stain in their skirts, if they could induce the public to believe him to have been unworthy of the life that was taken away by treachery and violence. Thus, on the one hand, he has been extolled as a man of virtuous habits and principles, who had borne a captain's commission in the army, of which he had proved himself worthy, in sundry engagements in the southern campaigns of the late war with Great Britain, particularly in the signal achievement with which that contest was closed, at New-Orleans. On the other, it has been represented that he was a pirate in the gulf of Mexico, during the greater part of the war ;—that he was one of the celebrated gang of Lafitte, infesting the Delta of the Mississippi, whose principal rendezvous was upon the island of Barataria ;—and, being a favorite of that daring freebooter, was sometimes entrusted with the command of separate vessels in their desperate service. These pirates, you will recollect, were pardoned by president Madison, on the eve of the battle of New-Orleans, in which brilliant affair they were reported to have done excellent service. From thence, as the

same class of reports inform us, Morgan returned to Virginia, where he led a dissolute life until the year 1819; when, it is added, that, with the assistance of a gang of reckless associates, he took the young girl of sixteen, who subsequently became his wife—Miss Lucinda Pendleton—by force from beneath her father's roof. To none of these relations do I attach the least credit or importance. The narrative of his military career, is understood to be one of those idle tales which designing men have found it convenient to usher forth to the public, in aid of their own sinister designs. The statement of his having been attached to the pirate-gang of Lafitte, in the absence of the least evidence of the fact, may be set down as a calumny, added to the guilt of murder;—while the story of the abduction of his wife is of the same infamous character. Other reports, cruel as the grave, touching the honor of the lady, were put into circulation by men who had deprived her of a husband; but those generous friends who espoused her cause, and sought so diligently to vindicate the majesty of the laws, took prompt means to wipe from her character the foul imputation; and the legal evidence of her marriage, under a license from the court of Washington county, (Va.) was obtained, and published in the spring of 1827. The simple fact is, that Morgan, by his own confession, was a *private soldier* in the army, and nothing more. In giving an account of his military career, he stated that he was in "most of the battles south of the Potomac." He did not particularise, nor did he ever mention, as I am most credibly informed, the battle before New-Orleans, as one of the scenes of his own exploits. These facts are derived from an impartial source—from a gentleman in whose employ Morgan was once engaged. They were obtained from his own lips, and are therefore to be received as true, so far as the principal is to be credited as a witness in his own behalf.



Morgan was an operative mason by trade. Those who have published favorable biographical sketches of his life, assert, that, by an industrious application to his business, in Virginia, he had accumulated a respectable property in 1819. It was in the autumn of that year, that he married Miss Lucinda Pendleton, whose father, I am told, is, or was, a respectable preacher, of the methodist episcopal church. Two years from the period of his marriage, he removed from Virginia, to York, in the province of Upper Canada, where he was connected with a brewery. This establishment being subsequently destroyed by fire, he removed back again to the United States, and located himself for a time at Rochester, where he labored at his former occupation, in the capacity of a journeyman. From Rochester he removed to the county of Genesee.

In person Morgan was of middle stature, say five feet six inches in height. His general appearance, for a man of low circumstances in life, was rather prepossessing ;—a compact and well turned person, with a high forehead, bald, and a quick, intelligent, but sly and sinister-glancing eye. His education had been nothing more than that received in a common English school ; but he had added to his original stock of learning by considerable reading ; and being a man of quick intelligence, and rather acute observation, he was enabled to pass as a sort of oracle amongst the lower classes of loungers in the precincts of village inns. Indeed, whatever may have been his course of life previously to his residence in Canada, his indolence, and his habits, after his return, were such as very naturally to throw him into the associations of such a circle. Although not exactly a common drunkard, to be which, according to certain legal decisions in this state, it is required that a man must be in a state of intoxication more than one half of the time, still he was continually mingling “ hot rebellious liquors with his blood ;”

—his nights, and sometimes his days also, were spent at tippling-houses; while, occasionally, to the still greater neglect of his family, he joined in the drunken carousals of the vilest and most worthless of men. His disposition was envious, malicious, and vindictive; as I am assured by a very estimable and pious man of Genesee county, in whose veracity I have the fullest confidence, and in whose employ Morgan was at one period engaged.

Such, I have reason to believe, is a fair description of the character of William Morgan. He was, withal, what is termed, among the craft, “a bright Mason,”—or rather, he professed to be such; for, as it will presently be seen, it has been questioned whether he was a legitimate member of the brotherhood. Be that as it may, however, he was a very excellent proficient in all the wisdom of the three primitive degrees of ancient Freemasonry. Too indolent to dig, he nevertheless was not ashamed to beg—at least from his masonic brethren,—and what his scanty earnings lacked in affording him an indifferent and precarious support, was made up by masonic charities,—in devising means to procure which, he was remarkably ingenious. It is one of the faults of the institution, that it not unfrequently produces just such oracles of its wisdom—cunning and artful men, having an air of the shabby-genteel;—with colloquial powers rather above the ordinary range of uneducated persons;—while, at the same time, it furnishes enough of weaker brethren, to form a listening circle, sufficient in numbers to add to the imaginary importance of the oracle, and happy in the privilege of contributing to the temporal wants of such travelling luminaries.

The original difficulties between Morgan and his masonic brethren of Genesee, sprung, as it is believed, from a combination of untoward circumstances. While residing at Le Roy, transiently, or otherwise, he became intimately associated with Maj. James Ganson, a man of respectable

standing, who had formerly been a member of our state legislature, and also sheriff of Genesee county. It was at Le Roy that Morgan was exalted to the degree of a Royal Arch Mason, on the avouchment of Ganson, as to his knowledge and skill in the preceding degrees. But it is affirmed, that the brethren at the west could never ascertain in what lodge, or whether in any, Morgan had commenced his masonic career ; and some doubts arose whether he had not, after all his boasted knowledge of the mysteries of the order, succeeded in palming himself upon them as a true mason, while in fact he was an impostor. At about the same time, the masonic edifice, at Le Roy, for the accommodation of the Knights Templars, was projected. Upon this building Morgan had a contract to labor, but, by some means, he was disappointed, and mutual heart-burnings upon this subject, followed between himself and Ganson.

Such was the posture of affairs at Le Roy, whence the scene now shifts to Batavia, which had become Morgan's more permanent place of residence. Here, another occurrence transpired, which at once placed "a great gulf between" him and his brother Masons, and aroused his angry feelings to the highest pitch of resentment. It was early in the year 1826, that the few Royal Arch Masons of Batavia, determined to apply to the Grand Chapter of the state, for a charter to constitute a chapter in that village. By some means or other, contrary to the desire of the more respectable portion of the applicants, the petition was presented to Morgan, who, as might have been expected, very readily added his signature to the names already upon it. In masonic usage, it is a matter of course that all the signers of an application for a lodge or chapter, become regular members, when such lodge or chapter is instituted. "So it is written in the bond." But Morgan's character had now become so well understood, and his habits so bad, that his association was not desired among the original prome-

ters of the object. They consequently destroyed the first petition, and set another on foot secretly, by which the charter was obtained ; and in which, on its arrival, Morgan was surprised and mortified to find that his own name was not inserted. He could now become an associate only by the unanimous consent of the more fortunate members ; and as that consent could not be obtained, he was of course excluded. Stung with rage at this treatment from his "companions," it is presumed that he was not long in forming resolutions of revenge.

There was another person who was an important actor in the earlier stages of the Morgan business, whom it now becomes necessary to introduce upon the stage. I allude to Col. David C. Miller, then, as now, the editor of a village paper published in Batavia. Miller was a man of respectable talents, but of irreligious character, great laxity of moral principle, and of intemperate habits ; which latter, however, I have since heard, with great satisfaction, have been reformed. His conduct had alienated his best and most substantial political friends, and a rival newspaper had just been established by his old political associates, at about the time of Morgan's removal to that place. These circumstances had occasioned Miller great pecuniary and political depression ; and there was little of moral principle to deter him from embarking in any enterprise affording a promise of retrieving his declining fortunes. Miller had many years before taken the entered apprentice's degree, in Albany—and this was all he knew of Masonry. But a similarity of tastes and habits had brought him and Morgan into the relations of intimate association, and it was but natural that they should discourse to each other of their private griefs. Morgan had commenced writing something upon the subject of Freemasonry, for what purpose it is not known, as early as the winter or spring of 1825. He was at a masonic hotel in this city, for a short time, in the course of that

year, and was often closeted with a man of considerable talents, and some scholarship, who had been expelled from the fraternity the preceding year, for a breach of his masonic faith, in writing and exhibiting certain masonic matters that were then supposed to be unwritten. Parts of his manuscripts had been shown by Morgan to his friends, before the occurrence of the difficulties I have specified, and before, as it was supposed, he had any idea of making the publication; although I strongly suspect that he purposed, eventually, to betray the masonic secrets from the outset. Such is the natural inference, from the character of his principal associate, during his visit to this city; and while here, he was urgent in his inquiries of a masonic acquaintance of mine, as to the place of residence of a masonic brother somewhere in New-Jersey, where, or of whom, as he said, he hoped to obtain a more perfect knowledge of the higher degrees. Be that, however, as it may, after his rejection from the new Batavia chapter, in the manner above related, he was suddenly transformed from an ardent and zealous friend of the masonic institution, into its public, determined, and inveterate foe; and, having become possessed of the fact of the existence of his manuscripts, Miller at once conceived the idea of turning them to their mutual pecuniary advantage. This was his first and only object, naturally suggested by his increasing wants, and by a stock of principle only proportioned to his interest. Morgan's imaginary wrongs, granting even that he had not before contemplated making the disclosures, made him a willing listener to propositions artfully made. Thus the bargain was struck; partners were enlisted who were to furnish the means of publishing the book, and to share the profits; which, by Miller's own subsequent confession, it was supposed would be very great.

I am, sir, with high respect, &c.

## LETTER XII.

NEW-YORK, Jan. 30, 1832.

SIR,

The design of Morgan to publish a full disclosure of the secret rites and ceremonies of Freemasonry, and his partnership, for that purpose, with Miller and others, were soon known to the public. In fact the intended publication was announced openly, and without disguise, early in the summer of 1826. Little attention, however, was paid to the subject for some weeks. The more respectable and intelligent portion of the fraternity gave no heed to it ;—others supposed the project was merely to supply travelling chapmen with an additional stock of marvels ;—whilst others, yet, believed that should any publication be made, it would fall still-born from the press, attracting no more attention, and commanding no more confidence, than did the neglected book known by the title of “Jachin and Boaz.” By degrees, however, some little agitation began to disclose itself by whispers, and low murmurs, and occasional movements among “the lesser lights” of Masonry. But these movements, however slight at first, like the gentle currents of air that, before a tempest, at first scarcely rustle among the leaves of the forest, which is doomed speedily to bend and break before its violence? were the precursors of a storm, that has swept with wild and desolating power over a wide portion of our country, and which it may yet require years to allay. Day after day the uneasiness among the brotherhood was observed to increase ; and the circle of those persons manifesting their ill-concealed restlessness and apprehen-

sion, was continually extending its circumference. These symptoms were exactly what the projectors of the work most desired. Should the book be ushered forth unopposed, and unnoticed, no faith would be placed in its contents, and few sales would reward the publishers. But the moment it should become evident to the community, that the Masons themselves were seriously opposed to the book, they could but perceive that the curiosity of the public would be irresistible, and the demand for the work unlimited. Threats at length began to be heard in whispers, that the Masons were determined, by some means, to suppress the book ; and discussions concerning the matter were most injudiciously admitted into the newspapers ;—thereby contributing to quicken the kindling flame, and causing many more of Miller's subscribers to withdraw from the support of his paper.

It was at about this stage of the difficulty, that, as it is believed a negotiation, was entered into between the Masons and Morgan. They had some conferences, and strongly expostulated with him against the course he was pursuing. Morgan appeared to relent in his purposes, but complained of being so connected with Miller, that he found it difficult to extricate himself. The result of these negotiations, was, that Morgan apparently repented of his design, and agreed to suppress the proposed publication ; and he even went so far as to deliver up his manuscripts, protesting that those which he surrendered, embraced the whole. In a short time afterwards, however, it was ascertained that Morgan had been doubly treacherous ; and that, while he pretended honestly to relinquish his purpose, and give up his papers, he had deceived them with imperfect draughts, and fragments of copies, while the copy prepared for publication, was, at the very time, in the possession of Miller, who was then proceeding with the work.

Connected with the last-mentioned feature of the transactions under review, were certain advertisements respecting Morgan, which appeared in sundry newspapers, and of which great use has been made by the anti-masonic party. Morgan, as I have intimated in the preceding letter, was in the habit of visiting his masonic brethren, in the principal villages of that section of country, and living much of the time upon their friendly bounty. He had been to Canandaigua, a few months before the period of which I am now writing; and among the first consequences of the deception he had practised, in pretending to surrender his manuscripts, was an advertisement in one of the Canandaigua papers, in the words following :—" Notice and caution. If a man calling "himself William Morgan should intrude himself on the "community, they should be on their guard, particularly "the masonic fraternity. Morgan was in this village in "May last, and his conduct, while here, and elsewhere, calls "forth this notice. Any information, in relation to Morgan, "can be obtained by calling at the masonic hall in this village. Brethren and companions are particularly requested to observe, mark, and govern themselves accordingly. "Morgan is considered a swindler, and a dangerous man. "There are people in this village who would be glad to see "this Capt. Morgan. Canandaigua, Aug, 9, 1826." This notice was copied into the Batavia papers with great alacrity; and, in a very short time afterwards, a paragraph, of similar import, was inserted in the paper published at Black Rock, with an additional statement, that the fraternity had "amply provided" themselves against Morgan's impostures, and his swindling propensities. Great pains have been taken to create an impression, that both publications were written in view of the arrangements then making for the tragic event which followed. But such, I am free to assert, and I do it with all confidence, was not the fact. And although it is an interruption to the regular progress of the



transactions which now begin to accumulate on my hands, still, justice requires that these publications should be placed in their proper light ; and this feature of the subject may as well be disposed of here, as elsewhere. The charge of Morgan's being an impostor, was founded upon the suspicion of Maj. Ganson, and others, that he was not a true Mason in the first three degrees, and had therefore obtained his exaltation to the higher orders, by fraudulent representations. That of being a swindler, rested upon the fact which will more prominently appear presently, viz : the borrowing, by Morgan, of some wearing apparel at Canandaigua, which he did not return. The masonic caution near the close of the advertisement, has no peculiar or dangerous signification, as has been alledged ; and the whole paragraph, is, in truth, and in fact, nothing more than a regular masonic advertisement, such as have been common, time immemorial, to put the brethren on their guard against unworthy and expelled members. Still more, however, has been made of the Black Rock publication, particularly in consequence of the words "amply provided." From this phrase it has been industriously argued, that provision for the murder of Morgan had even thus early been made ; whereas, at this period, there is no reason whatever to suppose, that any measure which should result in Morgan's personal harm, had been even remotely contemplated. But so much use has been made of the paragraph referred to, that I have taken especial pains to investigate the whole matter. The result is, to me, perfectly satisfactory. I know the author of that publication well ; and equally well do I know him to be utterly incapable of countenancing an unlawful transaction involving moral guilt. The facts are simply these :—The author of the paragraph in question, took up his residence at Buffalo, in 1822. He was in the habit of scribbling articles for the Buffalo and Black Rock papers ; but, although a Mason, neither had he before, the

Morgan outrage, nor has he since been in the habit of visiting the lodges there. This gentleman had seen the Canandaigua advertisement, but knew nothing further of Morgan, than that he was represented as a man who was travelling about the country, and sponging a living from members of the fraternity. An erroneous article had been published in the Black Rock Gazette, and the paragraph under consideration was written to correct it. He took the paragraph to the office in his own hand; the chirography was not disguised; the authorship was never questioned, or denied; nor was the paragraph itself arraigned as breathing a threat of murder, until the gentleman, many months afterwards, became a partner in another paper, which was in opposition to the anti-masonic party. It was then, only, that he was assailed, as having spoken daggers, although it had been merely his intention to say, that, by unmasking an unworthy pretender, the fraternity had "amply provided" against his future extortions from those whose bounty he had claimed as a brother. The author knew nothing of the outrages against Morgan's person, until after they had been perpetrated; and granting even that the intentions of the Masons of Batavia, whatever they at first might have been, were known in the lodge of Buffalo, this gentleman, from his entire neglect of masonic affairs, would hardly have been consulted, or in any manner advised in the premises. The editor of the paper in which the note was published, moreover, was not a Mason; and it is absurd to suppose that a writer who was plotting murder, would have selected such a channel to throw out his signals.

The mutterings of the storm began shortly to be heard at a lesser and still a lesser distance. The Masons were observed to assemble in clusters, as though in anxious consultation. Miller was vexatiously prosecuted for sundry small debts, and the collection forced with unusual harshness. Threats were darkly hinted, that the intended publication

should at all events be suppressed ; and Miller, becoming actually alarmed for his own personal safety, or affecting to be so, took measures for defending himself in the event of an assault. Morgan himself was likewise harrassed by the law ; and it appears that there were actual demands against him, justifying recourse to this last expedient for the collection of debts. He had recently been prosecuted in the Supreme Court, for a heavy debt owing in Rochester, and execution being issued, was bailed upon the goal limits by Nahum Loring and Orange Allen. In the midst of the excitement moreover which was now growing up in the village, (i. e. on the 25th of July, 1826,) he was committed to the custody of the sheriff of Genesee, at the suit of Nathan Follett, and was again bailed upon the limits. These latter circumstances, sir, will probably strike you as being altogether unimportant in a narrative like the present. In themselves they are so ; but they will nevertheless be found to have important bearings in the sequel. A variety of schemes were now on foot to arrest the progress of the dreaded work, and among these, in order in some way to extort the surrender of his manuscripts, was the device of entangling the author in the meshes of the law, as the spider involves the struggling fly in the perplexities of his web. Another plan was, to circumvent both author and publisher, by procuring an artful accomplice to insinuate himself into their confidence, so far as to become a partner ; by which means, it was presumed, he would be able, at some stage of the work, effectually to destroy it. Such an instrument was found in the person of a man calling himself Daniel Johns, for whom they sent a long distance into Canada, at the expense, as it subsequently appeared, of the encampment at Rochester. On his arrival in Batavia, Johns put up at a hotel. Being a man of plausible address, and great cunning, he succeeded in ingratiating himself into Miller's confidence, and having plenty of money to advance in the enterprise, he

was received as a partner, and into full confidence. Ganson seems to have been the employer and instigator of Johns. But his success in destroying the papers, does not appear to have been complete ; although during their operations, Ganson boasted that he had spirited away a part of the copy, and left the work in such a condition that Miller could not proceed with it.

Morgan, with his family, was boarding at this time, in the compact part of the village of Batavia ; but for the double purpose of security and retirement, while engaged in composing his book, he occupied an upper room by himself, in the house of a Mr. David, in a distant and less public part of the town. On the 18th of August, while engaged in his place of retirement, three persons, named Johnson Goodwill, Kelsey Stone, and John Wilson, residents of the village, but holding no official situations, in company with the constable of the town of Pembroke, fourteen miles distant, named Daniel H. Dana, came to the house of David, for whom they at first inquired ; but no sooner had they entered upon the premises, than they rushed up into Morgan's apartment, where he was then engaged in writing, and seized upon his person by virtue of an execution, together with all the papers there to be found. Morgan was instantly hurried off to prison, without being allowed a moment's time to procure bail for the liberties ;—the sheriff, who had been observed hovering near at the time of the arrest, joining the party, and walking with them to the prison. This was of a Saturday afternoon ; and as a matter of course, unless Morgan should procure bail before the commencement of Sunday, he would be compelled to remain in close confinement, until Monday. No sooner, however, had the prisoner's friends heard of his arrest, than they came forward to procure his enlargement by bailing him out. But from the moment the key was turned, until after 12 o'clock at night, when it had become too late to transact secular

business, neither the sheriff nor the jailor could be found, although every possible exertion was made for that purpose. In the absence of both these officers, there was of course no one present who could let the offending debtor to bail. Early in the evening of the same day, Goodwill, and the constable Dana, together with Mr. Thomas M'Cully, the creditor at whose suit Morgan was now in prison, proceeded to the boarding house of the latter, and entered the apartment of Mrs. Morgan, which was in the second story, and demanded if there were any property to satisfy the execution. Mrs. M. protested that they had nothing. The creditor then went below; but the officer, with Goodwill, pretending not to be satisfied, commenced a general search, tumbling over trunks and boxes, and examining whatever papers and letters came in their way. Finding one small trunk containing a few papers, they seized upon and carried it off,—assuring Mrs. M. that should they find any papers therein of consequence to her husband, they would be returned. While, however, these people were thus employed above stairs, a confession escaped the lips of the creditor below, which at once establishes the foul nature of this whole transaction,—proving it, beyond question, to have been the commencement of that series of abuses of the civil law, which have since so repeatedly occurred, in connexion, more or less direct, with this subject. M'Cully then and there admitted, to a young woman in the house, that, although he should like well enough to find property sufficient to satisfy his debt; yet, “he cared not so much about that, as he did “to get some papers belonging to Morgan.” On finding one of the trunks locked, and being told the name of the owner, he said “he did not wish that to be examined, as the “owner was a Royal Arch Mason.”

It is scarcely necessary to comment on the total illegality of this latter transaction. Having the body of the debtor in custody on final process, the debt was satisfied in the eye of

the law ; and the whole proceeding, as related to the seizure of the property, was a flagrant trespass, for which all the parties concerned were liable to prosecution, and the constable to punishment. But it must be admitted here, that it was all worse than a trespass from the beginning.

Morgan remained in prison, of necessity, until Monday, when he was admitted to bail. During Sunday, he was visited by many of the Masons who were interesting themselves to induce him to relinquish the publication of their mysteries. But no particulars of their conferences, so far as I am informed, have transpired. There can be little doubt, however, that the sole and entire object of this whole proceeding, was to coerce their prisoner into a surrender of his all-important manuscripts. It was for this purpose, and none other, that the execution had been issued ; that it had been thus indecently served ; that the sheriff, and his jailor, and the deputy, had disappeared, and remained in concealment, until it became too late for Morgan to avail himself, until another week, of the humane provision which even a barbarous law has made for the comfort of those who might otherwise remain forever immured within bolts and bars, for the crime of indebtedness. In one word, it was a shameful prostitution of the forms of law, for the attainment of a private purpose, which, if forcibly accomplished, would also have been illegal. Failing in the first object of their visit at Morgan's private room, and also in their search of his wife's apartment, time was wanting to effect their purpose in some other way. His confinement in prison, might, peradventure, operate upon his fears. The soft arts of persuasion, under such circumstances, might be used with better effect. Or, if necessary, the harsher means of intimidation might be resorted to, when the victim was thus completely within their power. But neither threats nor entreaties were found availing.

Accept, sir, the assurances of my high regard.

## LETTER XIII.

New-York, Feb. 1, 1832.

SIR,

During the fifteen or twenty days immediately succeeding the occurrences mentioned in my last letter, the excitement continued rapidly to increase; and the number of strangers suddenly appearing and disappearing, at Batavia, without apparently having any particular business in the village, awakened unpleasant suspicions. Some further publications were made in the newspapers, and among them was an essay, on the 1st of September, intended, probably, to allay the fever, by inducing the Masons to believe that there was not the slightest danger of their favorite though unsubstantial edifice being overturned—declaring that it had outlived Thebes and Palmyra, Troy and Babylon,—and that neither “the thunders of royal indignation,” nor “the lightnings of popular fury,” nor “the malice or treachery of man,” could shake its time-honored walls, which, sustained by “wisdom, strength and beauty,” would stand until the last day of doom,—or rather, to continue my quotation from the essay itself,—despite of all these, “it would endure till the last syllable of recorded time.”\* But it was all to no purpose. It became daily more manifest that there was a growing determination to suppress the intended publication, at any

\* Brown's history of the excitement. Surely, in the essay to which I have referred, the author could not have been any farther serious, than in his design to pacify his weaker brethren. If he really believed, himself, what he said, the delusion must have left him before now. The “wisdom” of the order, he mentions as one of its pillars. This is masonic, I know. But it reminds me of a remark made by Gen. Lafayette, at the time the Masons were pulling the good old General about in this city, striving among each other for the honor of giving him some of the higher degrees. “To-morrow,” said he, “I am to visit the schools; I am to dine with the mayor; and in the evening I suppose I am to be made very wise by the Freemasons!” I never shall forget the arch look with which he uttered the irony.

and every hazard. And it has been asserted that even thus early, "the intenseness of their anxiety betrayed the parties, in very many instances, into an avowal of intentions and feelings, showing how little they were disposed to regard the laws of the land, and the lives of their fellow citizens, if the violation of the first, and the destruction of the second, should become necessary to effect that object."\*

The next measure resolved on for accomplishing the destruction of the manuscripts, was a night attack upon the printing office of Miller, in the hope of seizing either the copy, or, if printed, the sheets of the work, or both. Indeed they had reason to suppose, from certain information, that portions of the work were printed, and nearly ready for distribution; another portion was also said to be in type, and nearly ready for the press. For the execution of this enterprise, forces to the number of between forty and fifty men, were collected from the ranks of the faithful in the surrounding country, —for the excitement among the craft had now become very extensive,—and a rendezvous established at the public house kept by James Ganson, at the village of Stafford, six miles distant from Batavia, to which place he had removed from Le Roy. It has been given in evidence that some of the persons collected for the execution of this branch of the conspiracy, came from a long distance—several even from Upper Canada. A number went upon this expedition from Buffalo, and twenty-five were expected from Fort George. Supper had been bespoken at Ganson's for this company, for the night of the 8th of September,—at which time and place they assembled, and at a late hour of the night, proceeded on the expedition, under the conduct of Col. Edward Sawyer, a high Mason, of Canandaigua. Before the conspirators had arrived at

\* Report of the Lewiston committee.



the printing office, however, they were informed that, by some means, Miller had been apprised of their intended attack upon his castle, and had consequently made preparations for defending it. He had indeed collected some fire-arms for the occasion ; and so well satisfied were the invaders of the fact, and so little disposed were they to jeopard their own lives or limbs withal, even in the cause of Freemasonry, that the assault was relinquished, and the forces, in the gray of the morning, dispersed. Some of the party returned back to the place of their evening's rendezvous, where Col. Sawyer was bitterly reproached for the cowardice which had resulted in the entire failure of such a formidable expedition. One of the causes assigned for the dispersion, was the arrival of the western stage, before they had concluded upon their measures, thereby rendering discovery more likely, before they could proceed to the work ;—but it was unquestionably the villainous smell of saltpetre, which caused them to hesitate, and ultimately to disband themselves,—each one taking the best care of himself that he could.

But the design upon the printing office was not yet abandoned, and a yet more atrocious crime was attempted within two days afterwards. It is only by degrees that men become criminal. And how often would the lesser crime go uncommitted, could he who contemplates it, foresee the deep abyss of guilt into which, possibly, this very first transgression will ultimately hurry him. So in the present instance : some of those who had intended no more than a forcible entry, and a robbery of a few sheets of manuscripts, foiled in that enterprise, now resolved upon the capital offence of arson, and all its direful consequences. On the night of Sunday, the 10th of September, the people of Batavia were startled from their slumbers, by the appalling cry of fire. The flames were bursting from the stairway of the printing office of Col. Miller, but had been so

early discovered, and assistance was so promptly rendered, that they were soon got under, without occasioning any considerable damage. Miller's offices were in the upper stories of two wooden buildings, with a stair-way between them ; and the lower stories of both, were occupied, to the number of sixteen persons,—so that the lives of all these people were jeopardized by this diabolical act ; while, moreover, had the expectations of the incendiaries been realized, a large portion of the village would probably have been involved in the common ruin. Indeed the calamity was averted only by a signal interposition of Providence. It appears that a number of teamsters had arrived in the village on the evening of this memorable night, and stopped at a public house nearly opposite the printing offices. However, unable, all of them, to procure lodgings in the tavern, and the weather being mild and pleasant, some of them took up their residence, for the night, in the body of a covered stage coach, standing in the street near to the offices. The flames were therefore discovered the moment they burst forth. A number of barrels of water, caught from the eaves of the house during a recent shower, were likewise standing in providential readiness for the occasion, and the catastrophe was thus averted. Although the materials for kindling a fire were found on the spot, such as cotton balls saturated with turpentine, and other combustibles, which had been thrown under the stairs, while the sides of the buildings had been smeared with the same liquid, in order to ensure their more rapid destruction,—a dark-lantern being also found in the street a few yards off;—yet, from the expedition with which the flames were extinguished, there were not wanting those who insinuated that the torch had been applied by Miller's own hand, in order to increase the cry of persecution, and excite the sympathy of the public in his favor. The cruel device was effectual for many months ; and the impression that such was probably the fact, was not

removed from my own mind, until the spring of the ensuing year. All this, however, in due season. Suffice it for the present to say, that the evidence, in the end, was most abundant, that the dark deed was attempted by at least one of the ringleaders of the fruitless expedition of the preceding Friday night.

It was on the morning of this same Sunday, the 10th of September, that Mr. Nicholas G. Cheseboro, one of the coroners of the county of Ontario, and master of the lodge in Canandaigua, applied to Jeffrey Chipman, Esq., of the same village, for a warrant for the apprehension of William Morgan, on a charge of petit larceny. It appears that during the month of May preceding, when on a visit to Canandaigua, Morgan had borrowed a shirt and cravat of a man named Kingsley, the tavern-keeper with whom he lodged, which articles he had not returned. Such was the nature of the larceny charged, and the necessity of the case which demanded the issuing of a peace-warrant on the christian Sabbath ! It is but justice to Kingsley, however, to say, that he had never an intention of entering any complaint in this matter, until prompted thereto by Cheseboro. But be that as it may, the warrant was granted, and directed to Cheseboro, as Coroner, who, taking with him a constable named Halloway Hayward, and four other persons, viz: Henry Howard, Harris Seymour, Moses Roberts, and Joseph Scofield, immediately proceeded for Batavia, in an extra coach, engaged expressly for that purpose. The party was recruited, from time to time, on the way, it being joined by Asa Nowlan, an inn-keeper, at Avon ; by John Butterfield, merchant, of Caledonia, and at Le Roy by Ella G. Smith. At this latter place, the warrant was endorsed by a justice of the peace, of Genesee—a ceremony necessary to give it force and virtue in that county. The party proceeded thence to the late rendezvous at Ganson's, in Stafford. where they supped ; and it is in evidence

that all the party seemed well aware, that the object of this journey was the arrest of Morgan. While at Ganson's, the party of Cheseboro were introduced to a Dr. Samuel S Butler, of that place, who was dispatched in advance, to Batavia, with a message to William Seaver, master of Batavia lodge, and to Nathan Follett, who has formerly been mentioned. Leaving Stafford, with Ganson, as an addition to the company, they proceeded forward towards Batavia, but when within one mile and an half of the village, they were met by Dr. Butler, with a message from Follett that they should not come on—(in so large a party, probably meaning,)—lest their appearance in Batavia should cause a fresh alarm. After a short consultation, the party now separated; several of the persons, and among them Cheseboro and Hayward, the constable, proceeded to Batavia, on foot, while others returned with the carriage.

Early on the following morning, (the 11th,) Morgan was arrested by Hayward, and brought to a tavern kept by Mr. Danolds—Morgan making no objections to going along with him, and breakfasting with the officer and his associates. An extra coach was again engaged for the return; but while preparations were making for their departure, Colonel Miller appeared, and objected to Morgan's being taken away, on the ground that he was then on the limits, and, of course, in the custody of the sheriff of Genesee: Miller, being his bail, feared that should he be carried beyond the prison limits, he (Miller) would then become responsible for the debt and costs. In answer to this objection, it was maintained, that, inasmuch as the warrant was issued in the name of the people, for a criminal offence, the officers had a right to hold his person, and take him to Canandaigua. Morgan made no objections himself, and voluntarily entered the carriage, according to the account of Brown; but the narrative of the Lewiston committee, which appears to have been drawn up with great caution,

conveys a different impression. Miller, it says, was rudely pushed aside by Danolds, the inn-keeper, who closed the door, while Cheseboro, mounting upon the outside, directed the coachman to drive fast, until they should cross the line of the county. The coachman, it appears, was suspicious that all was not right; and being reluctant to proceed, was persuaded by Cheseboro to keep on to Stafford, on the assurance that Ganson would then become security against all responsibility—and this responsibility was assumed by Ganson. At Le Roy, Morgan was told by Hayward, that if he chose, he might go before the magistrate who had endorsed the warrant, and be discharged, on giving bail for his appearance to answer to the charge, at the next term of the General Sessions of the Peace for Ontario. It may have been that Morgan, being thus away from home, felt that it would be difficult for him to procure bail, should he make the exertion;—but he said he preferred going on to Canandaigua, where, as he believed, he could soon satisfy Kingsley, that, although he had not returned the trifle of clothing, yet he had no intention of stealing it. The distance between Canandaigua and Batavia, is fifty miles; and the party having Morgan in custody, arrived on their return, at about sun-set. The prisoner was immediately taken before Justice Chipman, and examined upon the charge preferred against him, but which soon fell to the ground. It appeared that he had merely borrowed the shirt and cravat of Kingsley, and of course there was nothing felonious in the transaction. On being discharged from this prosecution, however, in which a Mason, by the name of Loton Lawson, appeared on his behalf, he was immediately arrested by Cheseboro for a small debt of two dollars, due to one Aaron Ackley, another tavern-keeper in Canandaigua, and for the collection of which Cheseboro produced a power of attorney. Morgan admitted this debt; judgment was taken by confession; and an execution was sued out on the spot.

Having no money to satisfy it, he pulled off his coat, and made a tender of that ;—but the officer refused to take it, and the unhappy man was forthwith taken to prison, and locked up at about 10 o'clock in the evening. It was on the morning of that day, that the sun last dawned upon his freedom.

Frequent and labored attempts have been made to create an impression, that the proceedings respecting Morgan last narrated, were had in due course of law. But the transaction itself, and all the circumstances attending it, are too transparent not to be seen through at a glance. If the prosecution for the larceny was instituted for an honest purpose, to vindicate the offended law, and bring an offender to justice, why was the business not taken in hand sooner? Why was the matter of the shirt and cravat suffered to lie along from May till September? And why did not Kingsley take the affair in hand of his own motion himself? Why was Cheseboro so deeply interested in the matter, and whence the necessity of taking along so large a quota of the *posse* of Ontario, for the security of a poor man, who seems certainly to have been rather a submissive and quiet citizen? How happened it, also, that these men were so ready to halt at Ganson's on the way? What meant the mission of Dr. Butler—his errand back, and the dispersion? How, moreover, are we to account for the manner of Cheseboro, on leaving Batavia with Morgan? And how happened his ready preparation for the second suit, for the paltry debt of Ackley's, and the indecent haste with which Morgan was hurried off to the gloomy prison-house, if this matter was nothing more than a fair and proper legal procedure? The fact is not so: for notwithstanding the subsequent trial and acquittal of Howard, Seymour, Roberts, Scofield, and others who accompanied Hayward and Cheseboro to Batavia on that occasion, on an indictment as participants in the conspiracy, there is yet testimony of a di-

rect and conclusive character, showing that this transaction was most foul ;—that it was, in fact, another prostitution of justice, and a solemn mockery of the laws of the land.

The unexpected arrest of Morgan, so early on the morning of the 11th, and the suddenness of his departure in the custody of the officers from the village, had left his wife ignorant either of the cause of his absence, or the direction in which he had gone. Becoming uneasy at his continued absence, on the forenoon of the 12th, Mrs. Morgan sent for Mr. William R. Thomson, the sheriff, to procure tidings, if possible, upon both points. Mr. Thompson gave her the particulars of the arrest, and the charge against him,—adding, that he presumed the allegation respecting the shirt and cravat was a mere pretext to get him away. Mrs. M. then inquired whether it was probable the restoration of her husband could be procured, provided she were to give up to the Masons the papers in her possession. Mr. Thompson thought a surrender of the papers might effect that object ; but he would give no pledge upon the subject. He however advised Mrs. Morgan to take the papers, go to Canandaigua, and make the attempt,—stating, at the same time, that it would not do for any person to go along with her but a Mason,—he not being one himself, as he then alleged. Mr. T. then proposed that Mr. Follett, or Mr. Ketchum, should be requested to accompany her on the journey, for which purpose he went and saw those persons upon the subject. Returning soon afterwards, he said that neither of them would go, unless they were allowed previously to see and examine the papers, as Follett said, “ they were not going on a fool’s errand.” To this proposition Mrs. M. objected for some time, lest she should be deprived of them. But on the assurance of Mr. T. that they would not keep them from her, she assented. Follett and Ketchum then came to the house, and after looking over the papers for awhile, agreed to proceed with the afflicted

woman to Canandaigua, as she had requested. They departed from Batavia at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and stopped at Stafford. Mrs. M. was then taken into a back room, where her guardians were joined by Ganson, and the celebrated Johns, heretofore particularly mentioned. They all thereupon proceeded earnestly to examine the papers, talking over them in low tones of voice. Johns was asked if they were the same papers which he had seen in the office, and replied that they were, with the exception of one degree, which was yet missing, and of which he gave a particular description as to the manner in which the manuscript was folded. After some consultation by themselves, Follett announced to Mrs. M. that he could go no farther with her; but that as Mr. Ketchum was going to Rochester, he would proceed with her to Canandaigua—assuring her, at the same time, that K. was a gentleman with whom she need not be afraid to entrust herself. Taking the papers with them, Mrs. M. proceeded forward with K., to Avon, where they tarried for the night. They arrived at Canandaigua about noon of the following day—Wednesday, the 13th of September.

During the journey from Batavia, the feelings of Mrs. M. had been sustained by the confident expectation, that she would not only meet her husband on her arrival at Canandaigua, but procure his release, even were she to find him in duress. The charge under pretext of which he had been so rudely torn from his family and home, was of such a paltry nature, that it could not be doubted that in the wonderful papers, which were now in her trunk, she had a charm that would readily dissolve all the bolts and bars that might stand in her way. But hope was a deceiver. Ketchum, after an absence of some time, returned to the inn at which they had stopped, stating that he had not been able to find her husband; adding that the Masons looked upon him as a friend of Morgan's, and being apprehensive that he had



come to get him away, would hold no conversation with him. He then asked her for the papers, and taking them with him, promised to do all in his power to ascertain where her husband was, and bring her the intelligence. Hour after hour passed away, without any tidings, during which time her apprehensions became painfully oppressive. Towards evening, however, he again returned, and informed the distressed woman of her husband's having been there ; of his trial for larceny ; his acquittal, &c. ; together with the particulars of his second arrest and imprisonment for debt. But although he truly added that Morgan had subsequently been taken from the prison, by a man who had paid the debt, and carried off in a close carriage, yet he stated the falsehood, that this debt had been paid by a man from Pennsylvania, to whom he (Morgan) was indebted, and at whose suit he had now been carried thither. He then coldly asked Mrs. Morgan, when she wished to return home to Batavia. The desolate woman replied that she would go immediately, as she had left a child but two years old, and, without money, was there, among strangers, with an infant in her arms only two months old.

Once more was the poor woman left alone, while her guardian went to take a passage for her in the stage. Returning again, in the evening, a scene occurred of the most interesting and painful description. He found Mrs. Morgan traversing the room, in the bitterest anguish, relieved only by the tears which were flowing down her cheeks. Though beyond a doubt he was deeply in the plot, yet he could not withstand the passion of her grief ; he could not, it seems, suffer her to depart under the cruel deception which he had attempted to practice upon the now wretched woman. Accordingly, after surveying her for a few moments in her distress, he took her to a seat, and attempted to sooth the bitterness of her feelings. He assured her that he did not know where her husband was,—that his place of

concealment was not known,—but that if she would permit him to take the papers to Rochester, he thought he should be able to discover him. He then told her that a part of the papers which they wanted were missing,—particularly the illustrations of the mark-master's degree,—and he urged that, on her return to Batavia, she would find the remainder of the papers, if possible,—assuring her, moreover, that if she could ascertain where the sheets of the first three degrees, already printed by Miller, could be found, and give him information at Rochester, by letter, he would give her twenty-five dollars, and the lodge would pay her one hundred dollars more. Mrs. M. declined making the attempt to obtain the papers, or printed sheets, from Miller, and said she would not receive the money. She also hesitated about giving up the papers now in her possession, fearing, as she frankly told him, that it was their intention to keep her husband in concealment until they should obtain them all, and then take his life. He again pressed her to write to him at Rochester, and inform him as to the state of public feeling at Batavia, in regard to the taking away of her husband. He gave his name on a slip of paper, "George Ketchum," and on taking leave, made a solemn pledge as follows :—" I "promise, before my God, that I will not deceive you, but "will do all I can to find out where he [Morgan] is, and let "you see him : I have no doubt when I get back to Roches-  
"ter, I can find out more, and I think I can find where he  
"is."

Ketchum had paid her passage, and he now gave her two dollars to defray her expenses back to Batavia. Thus was this unfortunate woman left—a stranger, in a strange place—homeless—friendless—with an infant at her breast, and another child at fifty miles distance, which, though not quite so young, was, nevertheless, equally dependant and helpless. Her husband—no matter what were his faults, he was still her husband, the father of her children—had been torn from

his family ; and with a heavy heart, she was now compelled to return, after a fruitless search, equally as ignorant of his fate, or of the place in which he had been concealed, as when she had set out upon the bootless mission.

Mrs. Morgan departed from Canandaigua, on her return, in the first stage, for Batavia. Arriving at Le Roy, James Ganson again made his appearance, and joined her in the coach. He stated to her that he was then on his way to Batavia, to make arrangements for her support, because her husband would not be seen by her for at least a year, and perhaps more ; although he assured her that he had not been killed. But he told her that in any event, she should be well provided for, that her children should be sent to school, &c. In a few hours after the disconsolate woman had reached her desolate home, moreover, she was visited by the same Thomas M'Cully, at whose suit her husband had been thrust into the Batavia prison in August, and who had assisted in ransacking the house for the anxiously-sought manuscripts. The object of his visit was to inform her that the lodge had appointed him to provide for the support of herself and children, and that he had engaged lodgings for them at the public house of Danolds, at which place her husband had been detained after his arrest on the 10th, until he was thrust into the carriage, and taken away. The offers, both of Ganson and M'Cully, were promptly rejected by Mrs. Morgan. If compelled to live by charity, she preferred receiving it from different persons than those by whom her misfortunes had been brought upon her.\*

\* It appears that the proffers of masonic assistance which I have mentioned, were not all that Mrs. M. received. It is stated in the report of the Lewiston committee, that "about the first of March, 1827, Henry Brown, Esq. of Batavia, said to be Grand Commander of the Knights Templars Encamped at Le Roy, called at Mrs. Morgan's lodgings, and exhibited to the woman with whom she boarded, a bag containing, as he said, silver dollars, which he professed great anxiety to give to her without delay. Mrs. Morgan never sent for the dollars, and they were taken away by Mr. Brown, but it is not known to what use they were subsequently appropriated."

Query : Was this the Henry Brown, who wrote the narrative of these important transactions, for the benefit of the Masons ?

From the circumstances of the arrest of Morgan, by Hayward and Cheseboro, and those attending the journey of Mrs. Morgan, as disclosed in the foregoing narrative, there can, I think, be no doubt of the correctness of the opinion I have expressed a few pages back, viz: that all the legal part of these proceedings, was but a solemn mockery of law and justice, the forms of which were knowingly prostituted to subserve the vilest purposes, to the deep and lasting injury of the unoffending man who was immediately concerned, even though he should have escaped from the toils which had thus been spread for his destruction !

I have the honor, sir, to remain yours, &c.

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## LETTER XIV.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 5, 1832.

SIR,

It was early on the morning of Tuesday, the 12th of September,—the morning of Mrs. Morgan's departure in quest of her husband,—that Col. Miller received an anonymous note, the chirography of which was unknown, informing him that an attempt was that day to be made to take his office by assault, and, at all hazards, to wrest from his possession the manuscripts, and probably the printed sheets also, of his proposed masonic publication. This notice was shown by Miller to some of his friends, and a consultation held to determine what was best to be done. Miller's office was already armed by two swivels, fifteen or twenty guns, and several pistols. Some were disposed to treat the threat as an idle one ; but recent occurrences admonished the majority, that it was the dictate of prudence to be on their guard. A number of the villagers, therefore, armed themselves with clubs, and repaired to the neighborhood of

the office, to be prepared to repel force by force, should the information conveyed by the note prove to be well founded. It was well that this precaution was adopted ; for, at about the hour of 12 o'clock at noon, the village was once more invaded by a gang of between sixty and seventy men, armed with heavy sticks or clubs, newly prepared, all appearing as if cut at the same time, and for the same purpose ; and the persons wielding them, were all, or nearly all, entirely strangers to the inhabitants of Batavia. There was much consternation in the village, at the appearance of such a formidable array of at least partially armed men : for the singular arrest of Morgan ; the manner in which he had been hurried away ; and the doubt and uncertainty that hung over his fate, were subjects already in the mouths of the people. Added to this, should a riot ensue, it was now ascertained, that there was not, at that time, a single magistrate in the village,—they all having, by a strange and singular coincidence, been subpoenaed into a distant town, as witnesses. The rendezvous of this party was at the house of Danolds ; but they had doubtless been advised of the preparations made to give them a warm reception, should they attempt any offensive measures, as well by the friends of Miller, as by Miller's own garrison, armed as it was by swivels and fire-arms of various calibre,—for they made no demonstration towards the office in a body. Along with this company was a constable from Le Roy, named Jesse French, who alledged that he had a warrant for Miller, and from the intimations given out, it was supposed to be a criminal process. French, with a single assistant, proceeded to the office and arrested Miller, who made no resistance, although one of his men called for a pistol, but repaired with the officer to the inn of Danolds. Here he was detained a couple of hours, but was not prevented from communicating with his friends, nor from consulting with counsel. He was afterwards placed in an open waggon,

with seven strong men, strangers to him, who were all armed, as above described ; the constable mounted on horse-back ; and in this manner, attended by the mob, increased by a number of the people of Batavia, they proceeded to Stafford, where, in the face of his remonstrances, and those of his counsel, who followed him, he was forced up into the third story of a stone house, and placed under a guard of five men, in a lodge-room. To all inquiries as to the nature of the warrant under which he had been taken, the replies were vague and evasive ; but both Miller and his counsel were again and again given to understand that it was a criminal process. By some means or other, however, Miller had learned that the process had been sued out by his evil genius, Johns, who has been already twice mentioned. This man, who had been in pretended partnership with Miller, had only left him three days before,—having succeeded in purloining a part of the coveted papers ;—while, as it was said, Miller had managed to get hold of some thirty or forty dollars of his cash. But be that as it may, Johns now suddenly made his appearance in the lodge-room, and marched quickly up to Miller with a drawn sword. The latter remonstrated with him on the subject of his conduct—to which Johns replied, with a faltering tongue, that he was only performing what he had been commanded to do. While thus in confinement at Stafford, Miller learnt that the process had been issued by a magistrate at Le Roy ; but his guards told him he was not to be tried there—nor by any ordinary tribunal. He was not to stop at that place ; but was going where Morgan was. In reply to a question from him, what tribunal he was to meet, and where Morgan was, the answer was equally significant and laconic—“ You will see ! ” A number of Miller’s friends were admitted into the lodge-room, at their request ; but the great and unnecessary delay at this place, and the refusal of those having Miller in custody, to pro-

ceeded on to Le Roy, where the warrant was returnable, created a suspicion that they were waiting for night-fall, that under the mantle of darkness, an opportunity might occur to play the prisoner foul. It was not until dusk in the evening, that the party proceeded onward to Le Roy, four miles. The journey was not unattended by noise and tumult—a considerable party of Miller's friends having followed on from Batavia. On arriving at Le Roy, French proposed to take his prisoner to a tavern, in which was a lodge-room; but Miller and his counsel both objected to this arrangement, and insisted upon going directly before the magistrate, which was accordingly done. Leaving the prisoner before the justice, French then went in pursuit of the plaintiff,—for it now appeared that the warrant was merely a civil process, issued on the application of Johns, for the recovery of certain monies advanced by him to Miller, while he was acting as a counterfeit partner in what Miller, at the time, supposed to be their joint speculation. After waiting about half an hour, the officer not having returned himself, nor made a return of the warrant, and no plaintiff appearing, the magistrate discharged the defendant, and told him to go where he pleased. Just as he was leaving the office of the magistrate, with his friends, French came up in company with Johns, and made an attempt to arrest him again; but he did not succeed, and Miller escaped to a public house. French and his party rallied again, and made several additional efforts to seize him upon the same warrant, but the attempts were all ineffectual; and, finally, the friends of Miller succeeded in forcing him into a carriage, in which, late in the night, he was returned safely to his home, and his family were, consequently, once more relieved from the terror occasioned by the extraordinary transactions of the day.

It requires no argument upon the preceding statement of facts, to show, that the process of the law was again, for a

third time, abused, and its majesty insulted, by this pretended legal arrest, and the outrageous circumstances attending it. It was well that a portion of the people of Batavia had been made acquainted with the intended visit of these audacious disturbers of the peace, coming under the cloak of the civil law. But why was it, that *all* the magistrates of the village, had been summoned into another town, as witnesses, on *that day*? A state of things might have arisen, in which the presence of the magistracy would have been of the utmost consequence. Is it not possible,—nay, probable, inasmuch as the conspiracy was widely extended, and its members very numerous, either that the magistrates were willingly absent, or that, without their own knowledge, perhaps, their absence had been procured precisely at that time, to favor the views of the conspirators? The latter is the most charitable inference; and yet, there is an anecdote on record, remaining, as far as I am informed, uncontradicted, which amply warrants a contrary conclusion. Two of those magistrates, residing in the village, were Masons. One of these remarked, to a third person, before his return from Bethany, (the town to which he had been taken by subpœna,) “that he (the person addressed) need not be surprised, if, on his return to Batavia, he should find Miller’s office levelled with the earth.” The gentleman to whom the remark was made, inquired, “if they, being justices of the peace, thought such proceedings right?” “Why,” replied one of them, “if you found a man abusing your marriage bed, would you have recourse to the law, or would you not rather take a club, and beat his brains out?” Comment upon this short but emphatic colloquy, is unnecessary.

There was now a brief pause in the progress of events; but it lasted only a week or two. It is true, that an imperfect statement of the occurrences was published in Col. Miller’s paper, and possibly copied by a few—a very few—



publishers elsewhere ; but very little attention was paid to the story abroad—probably, in the first instance, from an impression that the rumors related to some trifling local affray, which had been greatly magnified, and which possessed little, if any, public importance. I well recollect that the first knowledge I possessed upon the subject, was derived from one of Miller's papers, which caught my eye at a public house in New-Jersey, on the day of commencing a journey to Baltimore and Washington. It made but a transient impression upon my mind ; and seeing nothing further upon the subject for some weeks, during my absence, and even after my return, the circumstances had all but escaped my memory, until they were revived late in the autumn, by the unpleasant reports, and symptoms of high excitement, which began to reach us from the west.

In and about Batavia, however, a strong feeling of distrust soon began to pervade the unmasonic community, touching the cause of the protracted absence of Morgan. More than a week had passed away, and there were no tidings from him ; while the manner in which those of the Masons conducted themselves, who had clearly been either directly concerned in the transactions before related, or had looked on rather with approbation, than otherwise, was little calculated to allay the public apprehension. Instead of expressing any anxiety themselves, they jeered and laughed at those who did. Nor did they hesitate, occasionally, to justify their conduct in carrying him away, and even to declare, that any punishment he might have received, was too good for him. Indeed, their carriage was such, in various respects, as to offend many good citizens, and to excite the suspicions of those who would, otherwise, have been the last to entertain a belief that friends and neighbors, of so much respectability, could have been concerned in any transactions involving positive crime. It was apparent that they supposed their stratagems to prevent the publication of the

hated book, had been crowned with complete success. No publication was yet issued from Miller's office; Johns, three days before Miller's arrest, had succeeded in purloining a portion of the manuscripts appertaining to the upper degrees, and marring somewhat more; and Ketchum had obtained from Mrs. Morgan the original manuscripts of the first three degrees. These, therefore, were strong reasons why they might imagine that the work had been effectually suppressed, and they exulted at their supposed success, in terms of unqualified and undisguised triumph. Little did they think that the prize obtained of the wretched woman was valueless. But it was so; she having, in fact, obtained the papers from Miller, for the purpose of negotiating with the fraternity for the liberation of her husband, *after he had no farther use for them*. That portion of the manuscripts which had been embezzled by Johns, was sent to New-York by an express, to be laid before the General Grand Chapter of the United States, then holding its triennial convocation in this city. Of this circumstance, however, I shall speak more at large hereafter, in connexion with the name of an illustrious individual, now no more, who has been most infamously calumniated, not only in regard to the precise occurrence to which I now refer, but likewise in connexion with the whole transaction.

With sentiments of great respect, I am, &c.

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## LETTER XV.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 8, 1832.

SIR,

The desolate condition of Mrs. Morgan, after her return from Canandaigua, penniless, and, for aught she knew, husbandless likewise, did not escape the attention of the

humane citizens of Batavia. She had rejected the proffered bounty of the lodges, and, under the circumstances, she had done right. Poor indeed must she have been, to have acted otherwise. But although I would by no means undervalue the charities of the lodges, which, as I well know, before the institution had been so greatly abused, have sent forth their beneficence in countless streams and rivulets, carrying gladness and comfort to thousands of the destitute and afflicted, yet, fortunately, in this favored country, charity is not confined to the members of the fraternity. There are hearts to feel the woes of others, and hands to administer to the wants of the destitute—to cheer the widow's heart, and wipe the tears from the orphan's cheek—in every village that studs the face of our beautiful land. The kindest sympathies of these were enlisted in behalf of Mrs. Morgan, and the necessary measures were taken by the benevolent to provide for her immediate wants. Meantime, day after day passed away, without seeing, or hearing a word from Morgan; and from frequent inuendoes, and dark givings-out, it became a doubtful matter whether his return was to be expected at all. It was therefore determined to despatch a messenger to Canandaigua, to make inquiries as to his probable fate, and ascertain, if possible, the place of his concealment, or learn the direction in which he had been taken. The mystery of the case was hourly becoming deeper; nor was it in any degree dispelled, or the anxieties of the wife lessened, by a letter which she received from Ketchum, dated at Rochester, September 14th, two days after he had parted from her, at Canandaigua. This letter exhorted her to make herself contented—assured her that her husband was well; but protested that the writer could neither tell where he was, nor which way he went. It cautioned her to keep her own counsels—to be faithful to his directions, given her at Canandaigua—in which case, he assured her, *she would find friends*,—admonished her NOT TO EXCHANGE

**A WORD WITH THE PERSON WHO HANDED HER THE LETTER—**told her to write to him if she wanted money—and charged her to burn his letter up as soon as she had perused it. Of course such a communication only tended to increase the mystery already shrouding the transaction, while it also increased the now rapidly awakening suspicion, not only that all was not right, but that there was something to be disclosed, flagrantly wrong.

The agent selected for the purpose above mentioned proceeded to Canandaigua, and entered upon the duties of his appointment. Morgan, it will be recollected, had been lodged in prison on the evening of Monday, the 11th of September, on the execution procured by Cheseboro, and in the manner already related. The information procured by this agent,—Timothy Fitch, Esquire,—seemed but to increase the mystery he was attempting to penetrate. He procured five depositions, and made a sixth himself, in which he detailed certain important information communicated to him by the keeper of a livery stable, named Hiram Hopkins. These statements disclosed the following extraordinary facts: Morgan was thrust into prison, at about the hour of 9 o'clock in the evening. Immediately afterwards, on the same night, a man named Loton Lawson, hired a horse of Ackley, avowedly for the purpose of going to Rochester—distant thirty miles. He returned early in the morning, and went immediately to bed—informing Ackley, the inn-keeper, that some gentlemen from Rochester would call for him in the course of the day. In the afternoon, two men from Rochester, viz: Burrage Smith, and John Whitney, called, agreeably to the intimation. Lawson being aroused from his sleep, came down stairs, and all three went out together. In the evening of this day—September 12—(at which time, it will be remembered, that, under delusive guidance, the alarmed and distracted wife of Morgan was engaged in her ineffectual pursuit of one who per-

ver was destined to return.)—Lawson went to the jail, and applied to Mrs. Hall, the wife of the keeper—her husband not being within at the time,—for permission to see Morgan, and have some private conversation with him, for which purpose he desired to be admitted into his cell. This request was refused, and eventually Morgan was called to the door, where some conversation took place between them. Lawson informed the prisoner that he had come to pay the debt and costs, and release him ; and asked him whether, on being discharged, he would go home and stay with him that night ; to which proposition Morgan replied in the affirmative. Lawson thereupon requested Mrs. Hall to let him out, and he would satisfy the execution. But the request was declined. Her husband not being at home, Mrs. H. was properly cautious in her proceedings ; and besides, the execution being locked up in a desk, she could not ascertain the amount due. Lawson then said he would pay the amount of the execution when Mr. Hall came in ; but Morgan, being then undressed and in bed, replied that it was no matter that night—the affair might as well be left till morning. Lawson, however, insisted upon doing it that night, complaining, at the same time, of being much wearied, in consequence of having been running about for him [Morgan,] all day. He then went out, as he said, to look for the jailor, and returned in about half an hour, averring that he had been at every place where it was likely he should find the keeper, but without success. He was now accompanied by a man named Foster, as he called himself, but which Mrs. Hall believed was an assumed name. She thought he was one of the prisoners on the limits. Lawson again pressed Mrs. Hall to release Morgan, proposing to leave five dollars, a sum much greater than the amount due on the execution, by way of indemnity. The proposal was again declined—the lady stating that she had understood that Morgan was a rogue,—that great pains had been taken

to secure him,—and she did not wish to let a rogue out. Lawson pressed his request importunately, and offered to leave fifty or a hundred dollars in pledge, to bring her husband off harmless, if she consented. But she was inexorable, and he again went away. While these proceedings were going on without the debtor's apartment, Morgan himself seems to have had some misgivings as to the motive of the proffered kindness—observing to a fellow prisoner, “that should that man [Lawson,] prove a traitor to him, he would not give much for his life.” The applicant soon afterwards returned once more to the jail, accompanied by Col. Sawyer, and both urged Mrs. Hall again, very strongly, to receive the money, and release the prisoner. Being still resolutely refused, they went away in pursuit, as they said, of Cheseboro, whom Mrs. Hall knew as the plaintiff in the suit. On following them to the door, Mrs. H. saw two men near by, one of whom proved to be Cheseboro himself. On coming up to the jail, he directed her to let Morgan go, as these men, he said, would pay the amount of the execution, and he wanted no more of him. The money having been counted down, Mrs. Hall took the keys, and was going to release the prisoner, when Lawson interposed, and said he would go with her—stepping at the door at the same time, and giving a shrill whistle. Mrs. H., again looking out of the door herself, perceived a man, whom she had seen with Lawson at an earlier hour of the evening, coming towards the steps. On reaching the outer door of the prison, Lawson told her, as they entered, that she need not lock that after them; but there were other prisoners in custody, and she insisted upon doing it. She unlocked the door of Morgan's apartment, and Lawson, calling to him, directed him to hasten, and dress himself quickly. On coming out of the cell, Lawson took him by the arm, though not in an unfriendly or forcible manner, and they departed. Before Mrs. H. had secured the fastenings of the prison, however, she heard

the cry of "murder," and hurrying to the door, saw Morgan between Lawson and the other man, who had previously approached the steps, at the signal of the whistling, struggling with all his might, and crying out in the most distressing manner. Both Lawson and the other man had hold of his arms ; Morgan exerting himself in vain to get loose, and crying out until his voice was suppressed, as if by something thrust suddenly into, or placed over his mouth, or across his throat. At this time, and while they were dragging him away, Cheseboro and Sawyer were standing near by, without showing any concern in the transaction, which was passing before them. Morgan having been taken out of sight, a violent rap with a stick, was made upon the curb of a well, and a carriage drove past, following in the direction taken by those who had dragged him away. Immediately after the carriage passed, Cheseboro and Sawyer went off in the same direction—the latter picking up and taking with him the hat of Morgan, which had been lost in the affray. It likewise appeared, from the evidence of a woman, who resided opposite the jail, that sundry men had been walking, sitting, and standing, about the premises, during a great part of the evening, appearing to be much engaged in consultations, which were carried on in an under-tone of voice. Among these men she recognized Cheseboro, Sawyer, and a man named Chauncey Coe. This woman likewise heard the cries of distress, as of one in perilous circumstances ; and from the suspicious conduct of the persons before mentioned, had apprised her husband of her apprehensions that all was not right. After the noise upon the well-curb, she saw the carriage of Mr. Hubbard, with his gray horses—it was a bright moon-light night—driving down the street, in the direction taken by the men, it being at the time empty ; but it soon re-passed, taking the direction to Rochester, having several persons in it. These facts were all distinctly corroborated by other deponents. One

of them, on hearing the noise, went to the door, and seeing the struggle, stepped up to Col. Sawyer, who was a little behind, and inquired what was the matter? To which he replied:—"Nothing, only a man just let out of jail, has "been taken on a warrant, and is going to be tried." Sawyer being a respectable man, the answer was satisfactory. The statement of Hubbard himself was, that he had been engaged by a man whom he did not know, to take a party in his carriage to Rochester, on the night in question;—he expecting them to start from Kingsley's tavern. At about 9 o'clock in the evening, however, a man came and stated to him, that the party had gone down the road towards Palmyra, and would get in when he overtook them. He thereupon drove down the road past the jail, as requested, until he saw several men in the street, who directed him to stop. He did so, and five or six of them got into the carriage, directing him to turn round, and proceed to Rochester. Stopping but twice on the way, they arrived in Rochester at about the dawning of the day, but passed immediately through that town, and proceeded to Hanford's Landing, three miles below, where he understood it to be the desire of the party to obtain a vessel. He drove about eighty rods beyond Hanford's, towards the ridge road, where he stopped—there being no house nearer than Hanford's. His party alighted here, in the road, near to a piece of woods. He then turned about and drove back to Rochester,—meeting two carriages, even thus early, one of which was of a green or cinnamon color,—and thence proceeded home,—not knowing either of the party who had ridden with him; nor received any pay; nor observed any violence practised towards any one of the company.

Such was the information obtained by the investigations at Canandaigua; and it may readily be imagined that a development of facts so extraordinary in themselves, was little calculated to allay the excitement now rapidly enkindling



in Batavia, and the country adjacent. Although there was no positive testimony that Morgan had been carried away in the carriage, which made the unusual night-ride from Canandaigua to Rochester and Hanford's Landing, yet the circumstantial evidence was so strong as to leave no rational doubt that he had been spirited away, in the manner related. The circumstances of the transaction assumed a more alarming character, and a darker shade of suspicion was cast around them, at every new disclosure. It had already been ascertained, that, when the attack upon Miller's office was to have been made, on the night of the 8th of September, there was a party of fifteen or twenty men, connected with the conspiracy, assembled at a tavern four miles west of Batavia, who had come all the way from Buffalo; a large party had gathered at Stafford, six miles east, composed of men from many quarters,—some of them even from Canada. These had marched into the village, through different parts of which squads were distributed. Others had gathered there from Lockport and its vicinity. And the occurrences and discoveries made at Canandaigua, proved, very satisfactorily, that, in that village, and in Rochester also, there were men of character and respectability, intimately associated with, and some of them active agents in, these transactions. It was therefore clear, that the conspiracy was widely extended, comprehending in its ranks men high in the confidence of the public, and against whose good names the breath of scandal had hitherto never whispered a reproach. These facts began to arrest the deep attention of the public. A fellow citizen, an American freeman, guilty of no crime within the cognizance of the laws of the land, and living under their protection, had been removed from among them by means unknown, and in a manner unexampled in the annals of the nation. He had been kidnapped in the face of day, under the disguise of the law, and held in duress by its forms, until the arrangements for

his abduction were completed; after which he had been hurried mysteriously away, and left among men unknown, under circumstances of time and place, awakening the strongest suspicions that the crime of murder had probably been added to the other outrages that had been witnessed. Under this aspect of the case, a public meeting was convened at Batavia, on the 25th of September, and another on the 4th of October. These meetings were numerously attended, and their proceedings were of an impressive character. The very fact, perhaps, of the poverty, and low standing of the victim, contributed essentially to the interest of the occasion, and the determination of the people to ascertain his fate, and, if possible, avenge his wrongs. The facts laid before the meeting were such as caused the lightning of popular indignation to flash from the eyes of the assembled multitude. It did not—it could not appear—that all those who belonged to the masonic fraternity, were concerned in the conspiracy. Many of the most respectable of these were among the foremost in resenting the outrage upon the laws, and demanding an investigation. But it *did* appear, that all those engaged in the conspiracy, so far as the facts had been ascertained, were Freemasons—the most zealous and active of the order. And there were not wanting those amongst them, who ridiculed these manifestations of the public feeling, and added to the public indignation, by laughing at their anxiety to ascertain what had been done with the absentee. A committee of ten highly respectable citizens was appointed by the meeting, with instructions to follow up the investigations that had been commenced, in order, if possible, to discover the person of Morgan, if living, or his body if dead, and bring the guilty to punishment. This committee entered upon the immediate discharge of its duties, and published a notice to the public; briefly setting forth the nature of the outrage that had been committed—acknowledging the fears entertained that Mor-

gan had been murdered, but expressing a hope, at the same time, that he might only have been kept in concealment, or imprisoned in Canada—and calling upon the people generally to assist, by the discovery, if possible, of the victim, in allaying such painful apprehensions. The committee likewise sent an agent to make inquiries along the road from Hanford's Landing to Lewiston and Niagara.

On the 2d of October, the committee appointed at the first meeting of the citizens at Batavia, addressed a letter to Gov. Clinton, enclosing him a copy of the proceedings of that meeting, together with the depositions which had been taken at Canandaigua. In that letter, the committee invoked the prompt interposition of the governor, that a speedy and vigorous investigation might be had. "The excitement which pervades the people in this section of the state," say the committee, "for many miles around, has assumed an appearance which we think is a just subject of alarm—an excitement which it will be difficult to restrain or allay, unless the cause be investigated and removed." They therefore prayed the governor "to take such measures as might be within his prerogative to redress private wrongs, secure individual rights, and restore public peace and tranquillity." This letter was received by Gov. Clinton on the 6th; and on the following day his excellency transmitted to Mr. Talbot, chairman of the committee at Batavia, his first proclamation upon this subject,—setting forth the evils to be apprehended from such violations of the public peace as those complained of, and enjoining it upon the state officers and ministers of justice to pursue all proper and efficient measures, for the apprehension of the offenders, and commanding the co-operation of the people in maintaining the ascendancy of the laws.\* This proclamation was enclosed in a private letter, of which I find the following draft among the papers of that lamented man:—

\* Vide appendix, D.

*"Albany, 7th of October, 1826.*

**"GENTLEMEN,**

"I received your communication yesterday, by Mr. Evans, and, after mature deliberation, I have come to the conclusion that the enclosed paper, which you are authorized to publish, will answer the purpose of maintaining the peace and good order of the community. Indeed, I do not see how I can interfere to a greater extent at present. Any forcible opposition to the execution of the laws which cannot be put down by the civil authority, must be met in another shape; but, as it does not appear that any such has been exhibited, and I trust that none will be, the magistrates of the county must proceed, in the ordinary channels of justice, to arrest the offenders, to vindicate the rights, and to protect the property, liberty, and persons, of individuals, and to maintain the ascendancy of the laws: and if there should prove to be any delinquency on this occasion, measures suitable to such default will be promptly pursued.

"As it appears that the principal offenders are known, I have not thought it necessary to offer any specific reward for their detection and apprehension; but I am willing to pay any reasonable and necessary expenses that may be incurred for those purposes. Deeply regretting, and entirely condemning the outrages of which you complain, nothing shall be wanting on my part, that is due to the occasion, and the emergency. Nothing can justify a resort to personal violence, or an aggression upon the peace of society; and no person can be punished for his acts, however deplorable or depraved, except by the legitimate authorities of the country. I am, &c.

**"DE WITT CLINTON.**

**"TO THEODORE F. TALBOT, and others,**

**"A Committee in behalf of the citizens of Genesee  
"county."**

The effect of the meetings at Batavia, in directing the public attention to the subject, was prodigious. Every man who attended them, returned to his home in a high degree of excitement, communicating his feelings to his neighbors, who, in turn, imparted like feelings to others, until, like the spreading fires which sometimes sweep with irresistible and desolating fury over the wide prairies of the west, that whole district of country was agitated by an unappeasable spirit of indignation. The example of convoking public meetings was followed in many other places, particularly in the counties of Livingston, Ontario, Monroe, and Niagara, in each of which similar committees were appointed, and the determination was nearly universal, that the mystery should be probed to the bottom.\*

Unhappily, however, a very different feeling pervaded the bosoms of a portion of the masonic fraternity, which was but ill-concealed; nay, this counter-feeling was frequently and openly avowed. I have already more than intimated this disgraceful, and, to me, exceedingly painful fact; and in order to a just understanding of the case, and to show how it happened that the public mind became wrought up to so high a pitch of exasperation against the whole masonic fraternity, not only there, but elsewhere, without discrimination, or distinction of persons, it is necessary that I should be more specific. It is unquestionably true, then, that those of the fraternity who were directly accessary to the abduction, so far from countenancing the generous and righteous spirit which had gone forth, either openly justified the act, or treated the matter with levity and ridicule. Even the distress of Mrs. Morgan was scouted by them, not only in conversations, but repeatedly in the

\* Deputations from these committees subsequently assembled at Lewiston, as a convention, and framed the celebrated report of the facts which had been elicited by their exertions. That report was drawn up with great care, and the general accuracy of its statements has stood the test of the most rigid examination. To its pages I shall have frequent recourse in compiling the present narrative.

public newspapers ;—in many of which the whole subject was treated as a hoax, while by far the greatest number, it was passed over in comparative silence. Cheseboro had at one time declared that “Morgan had gone where Miller “would never see him again.” We have the evidence of the Rev. Mr. Barnard, of the baptist denomination, whose veracity is unquestioned, that previously to the abduction, when the publication was talked of, a Royal Arch Mason, then, also, a clergyman, in good standing, remarked, “that “Morgan’s writing Masonry was the greatest piece of depravity he ever knew ; that some measures must be taken “to stop it ; that he would be one of a number to put him “out of the way ; that God looked upon the institution with “so much complacency, that he would never bring the perpetrators to light.” &c. After the abduction, and while his fate was a matter of doubt, Mr. Barnard states that the Masons in that neighborhood, justified the abduction, and the murder also,—should a murder have taken place. A meeting of the Covington Lodge, to which Mr. B. belonged, having been called, for the purpose of concerting measures of agreement among the fraternity, Mr. B. attended, and expressed his abhorrence at the conduct of their brethren, in this matter. His rebuke at once kindled the lodge with anger, and he was scandalously assailed with abuse. A Knight Templar present, declared, that if Morgan had been writing Masonry, and if his throat had been cut, and his tongue torn out by the roots, &c., he could not complain in not having justice done him. For dissenting with firmness, from such horrible principles, Elder B. was expelled. Ganson, who has so often been mentioned, jeered at the committee, and told them, “that if they could hang, draw and “quarter all the Masons who had a hand in his abduction, “they could not get him back ;” he declared that “he was “not dead, but was put where he would stay put, until God “Almighty should call for him,” A public officer at Buf-

falo, declared his astonishment that Miller should have been permitted to proceed so far—(as far only as they then supposed he had,)—in printing the book, adding, “that should “Morgan come there, there were twenty men who would “take his life in less than half an hour.” In the town of Attica, a Mason, who had been a member of the legislature, said:—“If they are publishing the true secrets of Masonry, he should not think the lives of half a dozen such men “as Morgan and Miller of any consequence in suppressing “the work.” A Mason in Le Roy, a physician, and formerly a sheriff of the county, declared, that “the book should “be suppressed, if it cost every one of them their lives.” A magistrate of the same town openly declared, that “if he “could catch Morgan on the bridge in the night, he would “find the bottom of that mill-pond”—pointing to one near by. A judge of the court of Genesee county, remarked, that “whatever Morgan’s fate might have been, he deserved it—he had forfeited his life.” A Royal Arch Mason in Le Roy, declared, “that Morgan deserved death, and he “hoped he had received it”—“a common death,” he added “was too good for him.” Another magistrate, always counted a worthy citizen, asked—“What can you do? what can “a cat do with a lion? who are your judges? who are your “sheriffs? and who will be your jurymen?” The members of the committee were ironically asked—“have you “found Morgan yet?” They were assured that their efforts would be unavailing. Gentlemen were cautioned against acting on the committees; and were openly told, that whatever the Masons might have done with Morgan, it was all right—it was a matter of concern to none but themselves; that they had a right to deal with their own members according to their own laws, &c. Such, sir, was the language—not, by any means, of all—but of far too many members of the fraternity, in the region where the outrage was committed. Nor were these remarks, and

thousands of others of similar and shocking import, confined to a single neighborhood, or spoken in a corner, as you will have seen. And as these facts and declarations were repeated from mouth to mouth, and spread abroad over the face of the land, is it strange, that the excitement should have been created,—that the anger of the people should have been stirred up,—that their wrath should have burnt like a furnace? Nay, sir, would it not have been far more strange, among a people like the American, if such a spirit *had not* been awakened? It was a “blessed spirit,” as it was once emphatically declared to be, by the gentleman who at the present time is governor of New-York. True, it is deeply to be regretted, that in the progress of the excitement, it was carried to such extremes, and that the public vengeance was so far directed against the innocent as well as the guilty. Allowance, however, is to be made for the people, from the peculiarity of the case. The authors of the outrage were active Freemasons, and it was in their zeal for the safety of that institution, as they openly avowed, that they had done this thing. The great body of the people, who had been aroused into action upon this occasion, were not Masons. They knew nothing of the constitution of the society. They only knew that its proceedings were veiled in impenetrable secrecy,—of such societies the people are always jealous,—and they supposed that once a Mason, always a Mason. They had no idea that more than two thirds of those who have taken the degrees, speedily relinquish their attendance and membership; and that, forgetting, soon afterwards, what little they have imperfectly learned, they fall back among the people, and remain, in fact, during the whole after-course of their lives, Masons merely in name, without retaining a sufficient knowledge of the mighty mysteries, to work themselves into an Entered Apprentices’ Lodge. These were facts which the uninitia-



ted, forming the great mass of the people, could not know or comprehend. Hence, in their denunciations of the secret crime they were now endeavoring to disclose and avenge, they very naturally included the whole body ;—the more readily, beyond a doubt, because of the silly boastings of weak members of the brotherhood, in regard to the extent, the power, the influence, and the universal identity of the masonic institution, in all ages and countries, and under all circumstances, together with its universal knowledge of all things connected with it. Worse consequences followed still. Aspiring politicians seized upon the opportunity to convert a high and holy feeling of indignation, to the purposes of their political advancement. The people were stimulated on the one hand to push matters to the extremes of persecution ; and persecution, in any cause, begets opposition. The next, and a necessary consequence, was to arouse the feelings of the whole fraternity, and, with few exceptions, array the innocent and the guilty in the same ranks.

While the storm of popular fury was only directed against the heads of the guilty, the inactive and merely nominal members were bidding it roll on ; but when the anathemas of the assailants began to be hurled in a spirit of bitter and vindictive persecution, against all those, without any discrimination, (unless by public renunciations they confessed themselves to have been either knaves or fools,) who had ever entered a lodge-room, they rallied in defence of their own rights. Thus hundreds, and perhaps thousands of Masons, rose up in opposition to Anti-masonry, some of them even mounting the apron again, who, but for the belief that they were persecuted, and for a spirit that would not brook being trampled on, would have bidden the Anti-masons God-speed, without the thought of ever crossing the threshold of a masonic temple again. Still, it will appear in

the developements of this history, that the public had but too frequent cause to continue their jealousy and hatred of Free-masonry.

But I forbear. This digression is probably too long already. I have been drawn into it, in this place, rather un-awares. It is, however, a just view of this feature of the case; and from it I trust you will perceive, that, even in the early stages of the excitement, the faults were not altogether upon one side. Could the entire body of Free-masons, who were as ignorant as myself of the whole Morgan business, until months after it transpired, have looked upon the matter as I have uniformly done, I can but think that the result, so far as it respects the public and political tranquillity of those portions of the country where Masonry and Anti-masonry have come into collision, would have been widely different from what we have seen.

I am, sir, very truly yours,

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LETTER XVI.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 10, 1832.

SIR,

All traces of Morgan had been lost at Hanford's Landing; and the hope, for a time entertained, that he might even yet reappear, when his kidnappers should have either succeeded, or failed, in their attempts to suppress his book, either by compromise or intimidation, had disappeared. And yet, regardless of the deep manifestations of public feeling around, and the tempest breaking fearfully in all directions over them—with a fatuity illustrating most fully the Roman maxim, that the Deity first afflicts with madness those whom he intends to destroy,—the authors of the mischief were still exulting in the belief that their great ob-

ject had been accomplished, and that the wonderful revelations which were to have buried all the wisdom of Solomon beneath the ruins of the masonic temple, had been effectually suppressed. It was at this crisis, when the Masons were reposing in fancied security, and ridiculing the efforts of the various committees of investigation, now in full action, that, of a sudden, the hated work, to suppress which, so much pains had been taken, so much time and money expended, and so many crimes committed,—was issued forth to the world. It purported to be a complete and entire revelation of the secrets of the first three degrees of Freemasonry, and was accompanied with a notice that the illustrations of the higher degrees, would be shortly forthcoming. The discomfiture of the conspirators was complete; their chagrin unspeakable; their anger without bounds;—and many and bitter were the imprecations showered upon the head alike of author and publisher.

It forms no part of the task I have assumed, to discuss the claims which these revelations have to entire authenticity. Upon this point the public were probably enabled to draw a tolerably correct conclusion, from the unparalleled exertions made by the fraternity, in the first instance, to suppress, and when that end had failed, to discredit them. The distant masonic associations, moreover, were taught to believe there was danger to be apprehended from these disclosures, by the arrival of confidential messengers from the officers of the Grand Lodge of New-York, with an additional check-word, to guard the lodges from the intrusion of “Morgan Masons,” as the readers of his book were called. This check-word I have never received as a Mason; but I am told the fraternity have not been strong enough to keep it, and that it is published, among other precious secrets, in “Allyn’s Ritual.” If these circumstances do not fix the character of the revelations in question, perhaps a still stronger inference may be drawn from the fact, that Mor-

gan, whether dead or living, was every where, by the united voice of Masonry, denounced as a **PERJURED TRAITOR** to the institution. He could not have been a **TRAITOR**, if his revelations were *fictions*, but only an impostor upon the public, as the world believed the author of "Jachin and Boaz" to have been.

But in any event, although Morgan has been canonized, as it were, by the writers upon Anti-masonry, yet I cannot help looking upon his conduct as most unjustifiable and wicked. If he had actually received the first three degrees within the doors of a regularly constituted lodge, he was certainly bound by the strongest possible considerations, to maintain his promises inviolate, unless, as some of the anti-masonic writers have falsely contended, those promises were extorted by coercion, in which case of course, they had no validity; or, unless the faithful performance of such promises, should become unlawful. Thus, if he were summoned into a court of justice, and the due execution of the civil law required of him the disclosure of the secrets of the order, he would be relieved from the inferior obligation. Nay, it would be his duty to disclose the secrets. And here, as one of the objections to the order of Masonry itself, the advice of Paley is directly to the purpose—"never to give a promise which may interfere in the "event with duty;" "for," says he, "if it do so interfere, "the duty must be discharged, though at the expense of the "promise, and not unusually of good name." Paley thus sustains my view of the case, in its fullest extent. But, setting aside his oaths, which, being extra-judicial, I am disposed to treat only in the light of solemn promises, or vows, his violation of them, as such, cannot be justified, unless, from the strongest convictions of his conscience and judgment, he was persuaded that the promises were in themselves unlawful. "The guilt of such promises," says the ethical philosopher just quoted, "lies in the making, not in

“the breaking, of them ; and if, in the interval betwixt the “promise and the performance, a man so far recover his “reflection, as to repent of his engagements, he ought certainly to break through them.” But no such case of conscience could have arisen with Morgan, so long as he continued to practise the social and benevolent duties inculcated upon him as a Mason, unmingled with any of its abuses, or, so long as he had perceived no abuses to charge upon the order—and I have never heard that he alledged any ;—“for,” says the same standard authority, “a promise cannot be “deemed unlawful, where it produces, when performed, no “effect, beyond what would have taken place, had the promise never been made.” This rule may be considered a sound one, except perhaps, in a class of extreme cases, of which Morgan’s was not one. His case, besides, was neither of these, nor was he prompted to the disclosure by the burden of secret oaths which he abhorred. On the contrary, he was actuated by two of the worst passions which infest the human heart—**AVARICE**, and **REVENGE**. The fact in respect to the latter point, I have established in a former communication. It will be equally easy to prove the other point ; and not only that, but to show, that in using the means of obtaining the lucre he coveted, he was at the same time desirous of escaping public responsibility, by a resort to the same secret oaths which have been so violently condemned. His feelings of vengeance had been aroused by his exclusion from the Batavia chapter ; and in gratifying this passion, he saw, or thought he saw, a sure and certain “way to wealth.” Accordingly, amongst the papers found when his premises were first searched, was a written oath, or obligation, subscribed, and certified to have been sworn to by his partners in the proposed publication, wherein they solemnly promised and swore, on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God, not to communicate or make known, in any manner, to any person or persons in the known world, the

intentions of their principal to publish a book upon the subject of Masonry, "neither by writing, marking, or by insinuations," or in any other manner whatsoever. There was likewise found among the papers, a bond executed to Morgan, by Miller, Russel Dyer, and John Davids, his three partners in the work, in the penal sum of five hundred thousand dollars, conditioned for the payment of one fourth part of the money that should be received from the sales of the book. There was, moreover, another paper, being the copy of a letter purporting to have been addressed to these partners, by which it appeared that they already had had a quarrel, in anticipation of the division of the profits to arise from the sale of the publication. A copy-right was taken out for the work, and it was supposed that the sales would inevitably be enormous. Indeed, Ketchum, in his conversations with Mrs. Morgan, during the journey to Canandaigua, told her that if her husband had managed the business with discretion, he might have realized a million of money. Such, undoubtedly, were the excited expectations of the parties themselves.

I repeat therefore, that Morgan has no claims to the honors of martyrdom, on the score of moral obligation. The motives for his disclosures were clearly sordid and base; and his conduct in making them was consequently in every sense unjustifiable. If he was a true Mason, his revelations were so many violations of confidence, faith, honor, and, which is above, and over all—of TRUTH. "Confidence in promises," says Paley, "is essential in the intercourse of human life; because, without it, the greatest part of our conduct would proceed upon chance. But there could be no confidence in promises, if men were not obliged to perform them; the obligation therefore to perform promises, is essential, to the same ends, and in the same degree." "There is no vice," says lord Bacon, "that doth so cover a man with shame, as to be found false and perfidious."

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The case of other members of the masonic fraternity, however, who have disclosed the secrets of the institution, or borne testimony to the general accuracy of Morgan's illustrations, as for instance, of the members of the Le Roy convention, to be more particularly mentioned hereafter, is widely different from that of Morgan. So, also, in respect of many clergymen, and other pious individuals, who have taken the same course. These gentlemen, as we are bound to believe, have acted from a high and powerful sense of moral and religious duty. They have seen that a succession of lawless outrages, ending, most probably, in the perpetration of a great crime, have been committed by Masons, acting avowedly as such. They have likewise seen Masons, on the stand, maintaining that the masonic is of higher power than the civil obligation. And they have been made to believe—whether truly or not, does not affect the moral character of the case—they have been made conscientiously to believe, that the crimes which they have seen, or of which they have heard, have sprung from the nature and principles of the institution itself; and that those crimes are not only *sanctioned*, but in certain emergencies, *REQUIRED* by its obligations. Hence they have renounced, and denounced, and concurred in the exposure of these alledged obligations, with the view of aiding in the destruction of an institution, fraught, as they have recently been taught to believe, with so much iniquity. Nor, if we come to the point of strict construction, have they disclosed any secrets, since those things can scarcely be called secret, which are published in thousands of shapes and forms, to the whole world. But even were it otherwise, those late, or remaining members of the order, of whom I am now speaking, under the circumstances supposed, would find a sufficient warrant for the course they have taken, upon sound principles of moral philosophy. For, says the reverend and learned John Brown, "in all vows and promissory oaths, the matter must

"be both lawful and expedient, and in our power to perform, and the end must be to glorify God." "Nothing," says the same writer, "can be more manifest than that we may bind ourselves to what is just and lawful, to necessary duties ; and that though a promise, oath, or vow, cannot bind to sin, yet in any thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance." But, "*no command requiring, or bond engaging, to any thing sinful, can include in it any real or valid obligation.*" In such matters, a man's conscience must of course prescribe the line of duty.

I have touched upon this branch of the subject, as connected with its consideration ; but have not thought it necessary to go further and deeper into the discussion of the questions of moral obligation which it involves. In some new treatise on moral philosophy, it is not improbable that the nature of masonic oaths, and the validity or invalidity of the obligations they impose, may be learnedly and logically discussed, by some unprejudiced and enlightened writer. I am aware that a strong argument may be made, and sustained by the opinions of the highest uninspired authors, who have treated of the duty of man, from Cicero down to Archdeacon Paley, to prove that masonic obligations are not only imperfect, but actually void. And I am not prepared to say, that the same conclusion may not be drawn more directly and forcibly from the literal commands and prohibitions of the sacred writings, taken as the sole basis of morals. I am also aware, that the binding force of an oath, by which the juror pledges himself *not* to do a particular act, has been discussed in our legal tribunals. The states of New-York and Virginia passed laws, requiring all who sought admission to the bar, or who were appointed to any civil office, to take and subscribe the oath against duelling. It has been found expedient to expunge these laws from the statute-books of both states ; and the inference is, that even such an obligation, though bearing the sanction of



a judicial oath, was considered as doubtful, imperfect, or dangerous in its nature. But such an abstract investigation is foreign to the purpose of these letters, or, at least, unessential to it.

However base and perfidious Morgan's conduct had been towards the masonic fraternity, it affords not the slightest justification for their outrages upon his property, or his rights of life and liberty. We live in a land of law, as well as of liberty; and to the laws we are all amenable for our good conduct, and by them only are we punishable for the bad. Were it otherwise—were private associations of men, or secret societies, formed for no matter what purpose,—allowed to incorporate penal laws with their social regulations, and permitted to execute them, there would be no longer personal safety in the land; and the secret chambers of the lodge-room would become as terrible as the ear of Dionysius, or the subterranean vaults of the sacred vehme.

I am, sir, very truly yours.

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## LETTER XVII.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 12, 1832.

SIR,

Having thus failed in the principal design of defeating the publication of the disclosures, the conspirators, and their friends next attempted to divert, or allay, for a term at least, the tempest of popular indignation which had set in with so much violence. For this purpose an intimation was given out, and very rapidly and widely circulated, that the disappearance and protracted absence of Morgan, was nothing more than a *ruse de guerre*, to create and sustain an excitement, amidst the noise and alarm of which a countless number of worthless books might be sold for three or four

times their cost. The device succeeded to an extent that could hardly have been anticipated by its authors; and such, for a long time, was the prevailing belief, among at least nine-tenths of the people of the northern states. I say *north-ern states*, because I have been seriously informed, within a few months, by gentlemen of distinguished consideration, from the southern states, that, in those states, they do not, many of them, even yet, believe in the reality of the causes of the Anti-masonic excitement; considering the whole story of the abduction and subsequent fate of Morgan, to be a fiction, invented solely to subserve local political objects. The fact is, the atrocity of the deed was such, that men were exceedingly reluctant to believe it possible that it could have been committed, in the manner, and for the paltry purpose described, and by persons of so much respectability. Beyond the immediate region of the excitement, therefore, for a very long time, but little heed was paid to the clamor, the murmurings of which only were heard at so great a distance. Masons,—I speak of the great majority who were not in the secret—and those who were not masons,—alike believed it impossible, that a free American citizen could thus be kidnapped, in open day, and carried with unlawful violence, against his own consent, for hundreds of miles, through a thickly settled territory, occupied, too, by a people distinguished of all others in the country for their morals and their intelligence. That a man, under such circumstances, and among such a people, could thus be dragged away into exile, and perhaps murdered, by means of a conspiracy, embracing, as it was alledged to have done, hundreds of such people, was too improbable a tale to obtain ready credence; and it was not believed, for many months afterwards, and until confirmations strong as proofs from holy writ, from hundreds of conspiring circumstances, and the lips of clouds of witnesses, rendered longer disbelief impossible. There were, likewise, a variety of other

stories afloat, during the several months to which I refer, all tending to distract the public mind. Among these were rumors that the absentee had been taken to Niagara, and had passed over voluntarily into Canada, with an intention of joining the North Western Fur Company,—he himself desiring as much to remove beyond the influence of Miller, as the Masons wished to have him do so. Another story was, that he had been sent to Quebec, to enlist on board a ship of war. And another, and yet more probable tale, arose from the circumstance that within the fortnight after Morgan had been taken away, a sloop was wrecked on lake Ontario, of which all the crew and passengers perished. It was supposed that Morgan must have been one of these passengers. Indeed all were anxious to believe any thing, rather than the horrible accusations against so large a number of men as it was by this time known were leagued in the conspiracy.

None of these tales, however, diverted the committees in the west, from the efficient discharge of the duties devolving upon them by the nature of the case. At the October term of the General Sessions of the Peace, for the county of Genesee, bills of indictment were obtained against James Ganson, Jesse French, Roswell Wilcox, and James Hurlburt, for a riot, and for assaulting, and falsely imprisoning Col. Miller. The finding of these indictments was the first legal proceeding instituted in the Morgan business.

From the 7th to the 26th of October, Governor Clinton received no further information from the Batavia Committee. Understanding, however, from the public papers, that no tidings had been heard of Morgan, and fearing, from the tone of the reports from the west, that the outrages had been of a much more serious and aggravated character, than he had at first supposed, the Governor transmitted to the committee at Batavia, his second proclamation, accompanied by the following letter :—

*" Albany, 26th October, 1826.*

" GENTLEMEN,

" Understanding that William Morgan is still missing, I have thought it advisable to issue the enclosed proclamation, offering further rewards, which you will please to see published in the newspapers of your, and the neighboring counties, and in handbills, if you conceive it advisable. The expenses of which I will pay.

" I will thank you for such further advice as in your opinion may lead to a full developement of the outrageous proceedings that have occurred in your vicinity.

" I am, gentlemen, &c.

" DE WITT CLINTON.

" T. F. TALBOT, Esq., and others, committee, &c."

By this second proclamation, various rewards were offered for the apprehension of the several offenders in the outrages complained of, and a specific reward for the discovery of the place to which the person of Morgan had been conveyed, in order, to quote the language of the document itself, "that the offenders may be brought to condign punishment, and the violated majesty of the laws thereby effectually vindicated." All sheriffs, magistrates, and other officers, were again enjoined to activity in the discharge of their duties on this occasion.\*

It was early in November before this proclamation was issued to the public in the region of the excitement. In the mean time no little fault had been found by the people of the west, because of the moderate tone of the first proclamation, and the absence of any specific reward. Complaint was likewise made of the second, because of the small amounts of the several rewards proposed,—the highest being only three hundred dollars. But at the time it was issued, from the causes stated in the first part of this letter, neither Governor Clinton, nor his advisers at Albany, could

\* Vide appendix E.

have had any just idea of the enormity of the offence, or of the extent of the excitement.

During the months of November and December, the excitement continued to increase, and extend its sphere of action among the people. At the November term of the General Sessions of the Peace for the county of Ontario, indictments were found against Nicholas G. Cheseboro, Loton Lawson, Edward Sawyer, and John Sheldon, for a conspiracy to seize William Morgan, and carry him thence to foreign parts, and to secrete and confine him there. A second indictment was likewise found against the same parties, for carrying the conspiracy into execution. These indictments, by consent of parties, were sent to the Court of Oyer and Terminer, to be held at Canandaigua, in January then following. Meantime the committees were engaged in pushing their investigations with all possible perseverance and assiduity. In the course of their inquiries, they ascertained some further particulars respecting the mysterious night-ride, from Canandaigua to Rochester, or Hanford's Landing, in no wise calculated to lessen their apprehensions for the safety of Morgan. The carriage driven by Hiram Hubbard, as formerly related, stopped at the village of Victor, ten miles from Canandaigua. It was first driven into the yard of the tavern, kept by Dr. Thomas Beach, and from thence into the yard of one Enos Gillis, in the rear of the barn of the last-mentioned personage, and about forty rods from the house of Beach, entirely out of sight of the road. Among the company in some way connected with this mysteriously moving carriage, which was not allowed to stop where it could be seen for any time, was a man by the name of James Gillis, who then resided at Montmorency, in Pennsylvania; and it is supposed that his presence among the conspirators affords a solution to the remark of Ketchum, to Mrs. Morgan, at Canandaigua, that a man from Pennsylvania had taken her husband off in a private car-

riage, having a warrant for him. James Gillis now took a horse from his brother's stable, and proceeded forward. A hostler was likewise sent to bring out a horse for Lawson, whom he knew, and on returning to the tavern, he heard Dr. Beach, in speaking earnestly of some one, declare: "*Damn him, he ought to be drawn and quartered.*" James Gillis was seen the next day, but disappeared immediately, and was not found again for many months. Enos Gillis was examined before the grand jury in November, but soon afterwards removed away, and never afterwards showed himself in the county, or country, where it was probable he might be called on to testify. Hubbard's carriage was closely curtained on his way to Hanford's; but the curtains were rolled up after he had discharged his company in the road, near the forest. The agents dispatched by the committee, to traverse the line of the ridge road, ascertained that before Hubbard's carriage arrived at Rochester, which was just at the breaking of the morning light, a carriage belonging to Ezra Platt, a Royal Arch Mason, and the keeper of a livery stable, in that town, was procured and sent forward in advance of the Canandaigua carriage, and directed to stop at a sequestered place near Hanford's tavern. A variety of circumstances not essential to the narrative, proved, very clearly, that the carriage which started thus early out of Rochester, was intended for the relief of that driven from Canandaigua to Hanford's. Indeed, when called before the grand jury, Hubbard himself swore that the party which left his carriage in the "secluded" place, got into that which had been sent from Rochester, and which, after taking up his passengers, proceeded thence, on the ridge road, towards the Niagara. This carriage was next particularly noticed at Clarkson, fifteen miles further west, in consequence of its stopping in the middle of the road, while the driver alighted for a moment, and went into the tavern. The carriage then proceeded on, with the curtains

kept close down, although it was a very warm day. Two and a half miles further on, at the house of a Mr. Allen, the carriage again stopped, and the horses were changed—the fresh team being taken from the field where they were working, for that purpose. The driver from near Hanford's to this place, soon afterwards absconded, and was not heard of for a long time afterwards. The mysterious carriage, closed carefully as before, arrived at Gaines at about 12 o'clock at noon, on the 13th of September—passed directly through the village, and stopped about a mile west of it, in the road, at a distance from any house. At this place Elihu Mather came up, with a pair of horses belonging to his brother, James, who lived at Gaines. These horses were placed before the closed carriage, and Mather himself, although a man of property, engaged in a good business, mounted the box, and drove on, to the surprise of the inhabitants along the road, who knew his circumstances. On his return, he stated that he had driven the carriage for his brother. When the close carriage arrived at Ridgeway, a man named Jeremiah Brown, supervisor of the town, and formerly a member of the legislature, suddenly took his horses from ploughing in the field, fed them, and placing them before the mysterious carriage, mounted the box himself and drove on to Wright's tavern, nearly north of the village of Lockport. At this place the carriage was driven into the barn, and was so strongly guarded, as to prevent any persons—and there were many collected there—from holding the least communication with, or even from seeing it. There was to be an installation of a chapter at Lewiston, on the 14th, the day following, on which occasion a clergyman, of Rochester,—yet in orders, unfortunately for the church, though in another state,—delivered the address. He is represented to have given a most extraordinary toast at the dinner of the celebration, which may be noted hereafter. But it has nothing to do in this place.

This clergyman, however, was the only passenger in the stage from Rochester for Lewiston, which preceded the carriage whose progress I am tracing ; and on arriving at the town of Ridgeway, he stopped the stage long enough to send into the field, for Brown to come to him in haste : He did so, and they held a private conference. When the close carriage came along, Brown very readily and spontaneously, as it were, took his horses from the plough in the field, to relieve those in the harness of the carriage, as I have just mentioned. There were many people at Wright's, some of whom were armed, as it appeared, and it was told the committee, by some one at the house, that they had had orders to prepare a supper that night, for a number of Masons. The care with which the carriage was secluded, induced some inquiries, and it was rumored about amongst the people, that it contained a prisoner whom it was necessary to guard. At about 10 o'clock, that night, this carriage drove away from Wright's, towards Lewiston, and when it arrived at Mollineaux's tavern, four miles farther on, Eli Bruce, the sheriff of the county of Erie, in which they then were, was with it. He went into the house, woke up the landlord, and desired him to put a fresh pair of horses before the carriage. The son of Mr. Mollineaux opposed letting the horses go, unless he went with them himself, as he said they were young, and he was opposed to placing them in the hands of strangers. Bruce, however, would not listen to this, but pointing to Brown, said he had a careful driver. Mather stopped at this place, and Brown drove on—returning to Mollineaux's just before day light on the morning of the 14th.—The horses were very much exhausted, having been driven twenty-six miles, as he admitted, since he had taken them. The next trace of the mysterious carriage discovered by the committee, was the information, that during that night, Bruce, with Samuel Barton, a stage proprietor, called at the stage office, at Lewiston, for a car-



riage and horses to go to Youngstown. A driver, named Corydon Fox, was called up, who harnessed a team to a carriage. He then called at a tavern, as directed, for Bruce, who got into the carriage, and directed him to drive round into a back street, in front of Barton's dwelling house, which he accordingly did. Arriving there, he found a carriage, without horses, standing in the middle of the street, with the curtains closed down. Bruce here descended from the carriage; and Fox, who kept his place on the box, saw a third man assist him (Bruce) in taking a man out of the other carriage, and transferring him to their own. Not a word, nor a whisper, was uttered during this movement, and the same gloomy silence remained unbroken until they reached Youngstown, six miles. At this place they stopped in front of the house of Col. King, who was called up by Bruce. While the latter was holding a conversation with King, the driver thought he heard a call for water from within his carriage, and Bruce replied—"Yes, you shall have some," but none was brought. King now came out, and entered the carriage with Bruce; and Fox was directed to drive towards Fort Niagara—about a mile distant. They stopped near the grave yard, about eighty rods from the fort, towards which four persons who descended from the carriage, directed their steps. Bruce shortly turned round, and calling to Fox, dismissed him, by telling him to go about his business.

Such, in substance, was the purport of the information collected by the committee, during the months of November and December. It will at once be perceived that this narrative,\* taking it in connexion with the history of the occurrences at the Canandaigua prison, as given in a former letter, reduced it to a moral certainty, that Morgan had been thrust into the carriage, at Canandaigua, and kept in a state

\* Abridged from the report of the Lewiston committee.

of duress, until Bruce and others left the carriage near the burying ground, close by the fort at Niagara, in the gloom of night. This moral certainty, as it respects the identity of the person who was taken from the carriage driven by Fox, was increased, by his conversations, on the morning of the 14th of September, with a Mason by the name of Paul Mosher. In relating his night jaunt down to Youngstown, Fox stated, that when King came out of his house, on stepping up to the carriage, he thought he understood him, [King,] to say, " what, Morgan, are you here ?" Mosher not knowing what to make of the affair, spoke successively to two other Masons, who both expressed a belief that the person alluded to was Morgan. And one of them commented on the imprudence of Barton, in having sent a driver who was not a Mason, on such an errand. Fox, who had been speaking of the circumstances about the village of Lewiston, was admonished to keep his own counsel, at the peril of losing his place ; and within a few days afterwards, his lips were sealed, as it was hoped, by having the honors of masonry conferred upon him, free from the customary fees and charges. *Such a step could not have been taken, without a dispensation by the unanimous vote of the lodge.* But with all this chain of circumstantial testimony, there was yet no satisfactory legal proof of the facts, which had thus, beyond doubt, transpired. The story, however, was told to the public, and it is not to be supposed that such an excitement as had already been kindled, would burn less fiercely with these additional materials for combustion.

The connexion of Bruce with the mysterious carriage, having been thus satisfactorily established, he was arrested on the 29th of December, and brought before a magistrate at Youngstown, on the charge of having forcibly, and without due process of law, held William Morgan in duress for some time, and having secretly and illegally conveyed him thence to parts unknown. Five witnesses were

examined before the magistrate, and the facts already connected with the name of Bruce, were clearly established. Bruce made neither explanations nor defence; but as no proof was adduced on the examination, that a William Morgan had been forcibly seized and carried away from Canandaigua or elsewhere, nor that force, violence or restraint, had been exercised upon the person of any individual in the carriage, he was discharged.

On the assembling of a grand jury for Monroe county, in this same month of December, the presiding judge of the court strongly charged them to investigate the circumstances of the outrage, which was then the leading theme of discourse in all mouths. They called many witnesses before them, but failed in eliciting any satisfactory information, although of the number examined was Ezra Platt, who had furnished the carriage from Rochester. Edward Doyle, one of the witnesses, refused to testify, lest he should criminate himself. The jury found no bills; but having ascertained that Morgan had been taken through that county, they made a presentment, stating that fact, from which the following passage is quoted:—"From the great caution  
"which seems to have been observed, in keeping both Morgan, and the place of his destination, from the view and  
"knowledge of all but such persons as may have been confidentially entrusted with the design, and who would decline giving evidence, upon the ground that it might tend  
"to criminate themselves, the grand jury have found it impossible to establish, by competent testimony, the unlawful agency of any citizen in this county, in that transaction."

Another public meeting was now called in Rochester, and committees upon the subject appointed. This meeting was attended by Burrage Smith, and John Whitney. A number of masons were placed on the committee. But it was soon ascertained, by the other members, that "all their pro-

“ceedings were divulged by these masonic associates, notwithstanding an honorary obligation to the contrary.”

The sitting of the Court of Oyer and Terminer for the county of Ontario, at which the first indictments were to be traversed, was now approaching ; and, as the excitement was very great, the District Attorney of that county, Bowen Whiting, Esq., believing that if the persons indicted were tried by counsel there, the public excitement would not be allayed, let the result be what it might, addressed a letter to Governor Clinton, on the 7th of December, making this representation, and requesting the attendance and assistance of the Attorney General at the trials. This letter was received by the Governor on the 11th, and a copy thereof immediately, on the same day, transmitted to the Attorney General, as appears from the following note from the Governor himself:—

“ *Albany, 11th December, 1826.*

“ SIR,

“ I enclose to you a copy of a letter from the District Attorney of Ontario County, by which it appears that your attendance at the Oyer and Terminer, on the 1st Monday in January next, in that county, is considered highly important.

“ Concurring with the Circuit Judge, and the District Attorney in that opinion, and hoping that you will find it not inconvenient to attend on that occasion, I consider it my duty to request it.

“ I am, &c.

“ DE WITT CLINTON.

“ SAMUEL A. TALCOTT, Esq.

“ *Attorney General.*”

The Attorney General did not attend the trials, but for what reasons I am not informed.

I have the honor, &c.

## LETTER XVIII.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 14, 1832.

SIR,

The Circuit Court, and Court of Oyer and Terminer, for the county of Ontario, commenced its sittings on Monday, January 1st, 1827. The present governor of this state, then a circuit judge, presided, associated with whom, upon the bench, were, the Hon. Nathaniel W. Howell, first judge of the county, and judges Younglove, Atwater, and Brooks. The first of that series of extraordinary trials which have occupied so wide a space in our judicial annals during the last five years, was now commenced, by the arraignment of Cheseboro, Lawson, Sawyer, and Sheldon, on the several indictments heretofore mentioned, to which they severally pleaded not guilty. Great interest was manifested on this occasion, by all parties. Deputations from the different committees organized by popular meetings, were in attendance, and more than one hundred witnesses, who had been subpœnaed, were present, together with an immense concourse of people. The case, in all its features, was without a precedent, and a deep and universal anxiety existed among the people, to have the dark mystery unriddled. The bar presented a formidable array of counsel on the important occasion, embracing most of the professional talent in that region of country. The prosecution was conducted by Bowen Whiting, the District Attorney, assisted by seven other counsellors, viz: John Dixon, Wm. H. Adams, J. Wilson, T. F. Talbot, H. W. Taylor, O. Benjamin, and C. Butler. The counsel for the defendants were, John C. Spencer, M. H. Sibley, H. F. Penfield, and W. Hubbell.

On Tuesday morning, the second day of the term, the public prosecutor moved on the trials. The first witness called was David C. Miller, but to the surprise of every body, it was found that he was absent. Subpœnaed by both parties ; and having borne such a prominent part in the transactions which had so deeply agitated the community, and being, moreover, so much interested in having the guilty punished, his absence was a matter of astonishment. It having been satisfactorily shown to the court, that Miller was at home in Batavia, and in good health, attachments were granted at the instance of both parties, and the trials were postponed, to allow time for their return.

On Wednesday morning January 3d, the motion to bring on the trials was renewed,—when Cheseboro, Sawyer, and Lawson, severally withdrew their pleas of not guilty, and pleaded guilty to both indictments ;—reserving the right to move the court in arrest of judgment upon either. The counsel for Sheldon then stated that he admitted that the offence charged in the indictment against him, had been committed, but denied having had any participation therein. Under these circumstances the case went to trial ; but it will readily be perceived that the admissions of the defendants only left it necessary for the prosecution to identify Sheldon with the conspiracy. Of course the scope of the inquiry was greatly narrowed, and the interest proportionately lessened. The particulars of the taking of Morgan from the prison, and the active participation of Lawson, the presence of Cheseboro and Sawyer, &c., was proved accurately as I have related the facts in a former letter. The wife of the jailor testified, that according to the best of her knowledge and belief, the defendant at the bar, Sheldon, was the same man who came to the jail with Lawson, calling himself Foster, and who assisted in dragging Morgan away. A number of witnesses were examined to prove an *alibi* ; and the testimony was very strong that the defendant had

been sitting at Kingsley's tavern the whole evening ; that he lodged there that night ; and consequently that he could have had no participation in the transactions at the jail. There was, however, among the witnesses on the part of the prosecution, a Mr. Green, an inn-keeper, from Batavia, who swore, positively, that the defendant came to his house late in the evening of the 10th of September, took supper, and lodging, and breakfasted there on the following morning. He, (the defendant,) entered into conversation with the witness ; said that he had been suspected of having kindled the fire in Miller's office, and desired him, (the witness) to recollect that he had lodged in his house that night. The defendant talked a good deal upon the subject of Morgan's proposed revelations, avowed himself a Royal Arch Mason, and said he had been in that neighborhood several days, to assist in suppressing the book. He likewise sent for Kelsey Stone, with whom he held some private conversation ; and while there wrote a letter in hieroglyphics, which he addressed to General Solomon Van Rensselaer. The witness, a respectable man, was very positive, as to the identity of Sheldon, and, in regard to all the circumstances—particularly of the letter, which he saw the defendant sign with his own hand, 'John Sheldon.' On the other hand, Kelsey Stone was introduced as a witness in behalf of the defendant, and swore, that according to his best recollection, he was not the man whom he had been sent to meet at the house of Mr. Green, in Batavia. The person whom he had there seen was a stranger, to him unknown ; but he was confident Sheldon was not the man. In other respects, his testimony fully confirmed that of Green. It was proved, however, by the Canandaigua witnesses, that on the morning after Morgan had been carried away, the defendant had appeared to know much about the subject. To a Mr. Prescott, he had said, "Morgan is carried off: I know all about the business, but shall not tell you. I know who went

“into the jail after Morgan—he does not live in this village—  
“Morgan has gone where the people of this country will never see him; but if his family will accept the funds which the Masons have provided for them, they will be well enough off.” The impression of the jailor’s wife, that the defendant and the man Foster, were one and the same person; the positive testimony of Green; and confessions like that which I have just quoted, from the lips of the defendant himself, were too strong against him, and he was convicted. Sheldon, afterwards, made a deposition, which was filed of record, and in which he swore that he was not at the jail at the time referred to; that he had not been at Batavia within eight years; that he had never seen the witness, Green, until in court on that occasion; that he had never visited the jail in company with Loton Lawson; that he was not the man whom the jailor’s wife had supposed to be Foster; and that he had never seen or known William Morgan. His admissions upon the subject, he also deposed, “were made in the way of romance, and from amusement only.” And so it afterwards appeared; for it was by subsequent disclosures clearly proved, that Sheldon was in truth and in fact an innocent man, although the witness, Green, was absolved from the imputation of perjury, from the fact which afterwards appeared, that the mysterious stranger who was at Green’s house, under the circumstances mentioned, was a Mr. Averill, from Orleans county, whose dress and appearance so strongly resembled those of Sheldon, as to occasion the mistake.

Among the witnesses sworn upon this trial, were, Burage Smith, and John Whitney, of Rochester. Both of them objected to answering any questions, because, in doing so, they apprehended that they might criminate themselves. After being well instructed by the court, however, as to their privileges, they testified in part. Smith admitted that he came to Canandaigua from Rochester, on the 12th



of September. He also admitted that he saw Lawson, but declined answering the question whether he had heard any conversation between Lawson and others about carrying Morgan away. His objection having been overruled by the court, he then admitted that he did hear Lawson in conversation with three or four others, upon that subject, on the side-walk, near the jail. He left Canandaigua on the evening that Morgan was taken away, between 6 and 8 o'clock. He admitted that he was at Lewiston, attending the installation of a chapter, two or three days afterwards. Being asked if he saw Morgan at Fort Niagara, his counsel objected to the question, and the court set it aside, as being irrelevant. Whitney testified to the fact of his coming to Canandaigua on the said 12th of September, in company with Smith; but declined telling at what time he departed on his return, lest he should criminate himself. Corydon Fox, the stage driver from Lewiston to Youngstown, was also a witness upon this trial. He testified merely to the fact of having driven a carriage, sometime in September, with closed curtains, down to the river. Three or four persons got out of the carriage, but he did not know that either of them was Morgan, or that any person in the carriage was confined. He only knew one of the persons who rode with him on that occasion, and that one was neither of the defendants.

I have already stated that Sheldon was found guilty by the jury. They were absent only one hour. On Friday evening, January 5th, the counsel for the defendants moved an arrest of judgment upon one of the indictments, arguing that the defendants could not be convicted both for a conspiracy to do an unlawful act, and also for the doing of that act; and they called upon the public prosecutor to elect the indictment upon which he would take judgment. After argument upon both sides, the court decided that judgment should not be pronounced upon both indictments, but that

in each case, as soon as it should have been pronounced upon, a *nolle prosequi* should be entered upon the other. On the following morning, January 6th, the defendants appeared at the bar for judgment, and several witnesses were called, and examined by the public prosecutor, in aggravation of the case. Among these Mrs. Morgan was examined, and her appearance and manner made a favorable impression in her behalf. But no additional facts were elicited.

Depositions were then put in by their counsel, to be heard in mitigation of their offence, by three of the defendants. Cheseboro deposed that he had not seen Morgan since the night of the 11th of September, when he was taken from the magistrate's office by the officer who committed him to prison. He knew it was intended to take Morgan away, but supposed that he had consented to go freely, and he was not aware that any force had been employed against him. Their object was to remove him from beyond the neighborhood and influence of Miller, who was, as they believed, inducing him to publish a book, disclosing the secrets of Masonry, which they thought was calculated to bring disgrace upon the order. He declared that he had had no hand in any subsequent transactions in respect to Morgan; that he had been informed that Morgan had been carried into the county of Monroe—since which time he had not heard what had become of him, and knew not where he was. But in opposition to this, it was testified by Israel B. Hall, called by the prosecution, that on the morning after Morgan was taken away, he called on Cheseboro to explain the transaction. The latter replied that Morgan was where Miller would not get hold of him—he guessed he might be on board of a ship; but avoided giving direct answers.

Sawyer deposed that he had never seen Morgan until the same evening of the 11th September, in the justice's office,—that he had heard nothing previously of any designs against

him,—that he was not aware of any intention of taking him from the jail, on the evening of the 12th, until Lawson met him during the evening in the street, and asked him to go to the jail to persuade the jailor's wife to release Morgan, on his paying the amount of the execution. He thought during the whole time; that it was all a matter of willingness and consent on the part of Morgan, to go away, until after he came out into the street, when he expressed his reluctance, and the struggle ensued, at which the deponent was surprised. He did not know how much resistance Morgan made, or how much force was applied to compel him to go along. He was prevented from interfering by the surprise into which he was thrown, but deeply regretted that he had not interfered. This omission was the only criminal part of his agency in the matter, with which he could reproach himself. He followed after Morgan, at the distance of some rods, and saw him taken into the carriage. He concurred with Cheseboro as to the motive of his removal, and declared that he had never seen Morgan since he entered the carriage, and knew not what had become of him.

In addition to these depositions, a number of the most respectable citizens of Canandaigua were examined as to the general habits and character of the defendants, and these testimonials were in all respects strongly in their favor.

In behalf of Sheldon, the deposition which I have already noted above, was put in and read. Cheseboro, Sawyer, and Lawson, all deposed that Sheldon, so far as they were acquainted with the transactions in question, was entirely innocent. But the jury had not so found him, and he was sentenced with the others. In the address with which Judge Throop prefaced his sentence, he was, I think, particularly forcible, and his remarks were so just, and so well expressed, that a few passages may, very properly, be transcribed from it:—

"You have been convicted," said the judge, "of a daring, wicked and presumptuous crime—such an one as we did hope would not in our day have polluted this land. You have robbed the state of a citizen, a citizen of his liberty, a wife of a husband, and a family of helpless children of the endearments and protecting care of a parent. And whether the unfortunate victim of your rage has been immolated, or is in the land of the living, we are ignorant, and even you do not pretend to know. It is admitted in this case, and stands proved, that Morgan was, by a hypocritical pretence of friendship and charity, and that, too, in the imposing shape of pecuniary relief to a distressed and poverty bound prisoner, beguiled to entrust himself to one of your number, who seized him, as soon as a confederate arrived to his aid, almost at his prison door, and in the night time hurried him into a carriage, and forcibly transported him out of the state. But, great as are the individual wrongs which you have inflicted on these helpless and wretched human beings, they are not the heaviest part of your crime. You have disturbed the public peace—you have dared to raise your parricidal arms against the laws and constitution of your government—you have assumed a power which is incompatible with a due subordination to the laws and public authority of your state. He was a citizen under the protection of our laws; you were citizens and owed obedience to them. What hardihood and wickedness then prompted you to steel your hearts against the claims of humanity, and to dare set at defiance those laws to which you owed submission, and which cannot suffer a citizen's liberty to be restrained with impunity, without violating its duties of protection, assured to every individual under the social compact. \* \* \* \* \*

Our laws will resent such attacks as you have made upon their sovereignty. Your conduct has created, in the people of this section of the country, a strong feeling of virtuous indignation. The court rejoices to witness it—to be made sure that a citizen's person cannot be invaded by lawless violence, without its being felt by every individual in the community. It is a blessed spirit, and we do hope that it will not subside—that it will be accompanied by a ceaseless vigilance, and untiring activity, until every actor in this profligate conspiracy is hunted from his hiding place, and brought before the tribunals of the country, to receive the punishment merited by his crime. We think that we see in this public sensation the spirit which brought us into existence as a nation, and a pledge that our rights and liberties are destined to endure. But this is not all; your offence was not the result of passion suddenly excited, nor the deed of one individual. It was preconcerted, deliberated upon, and carried into effect, by the dictates of the secret councils and conclave of many actors. It takes its deepest hues of guilt from a conspiracy—a crime most dreaded from the depravity of heart it evinces, the power for unlawful purposes which it combines, and from its ability to defy the power of the law, and its ultimate danger to the public peace. Hence it is, that the crime is considered full, when the wicked purpose is proved to have been formed; and the subsequent carrying into effect the object of the conspiracy, does not, in the eye of the law, elevate the degree of the crime."

In conclusion, the court intimated its regret that the law had only made the offence of which the defendants were guilty, a misdemeanor, instead of a felony. The omission, it was supposed, had arisen from the great improbability that such a crime could ever be committed in this country; but the court thought it could not discharge its duty, without depriving the defendants of a portion of that liberty, which, in the plenitude of lawless force, they had taken from Morgan. Lawson was then sentenced to two years imprisonment, in the county jail; Cheseboro, to imprisonment for one year, in the same place; Sheldon to an imprisonment of three months; and Sawyer to one.

On the day before the adjournment, Miller was brought up before the court under the attachments that had been issued on Tuesday, to answer for his contempt. It appeared by his answers, on oath, to the interrogatories put, that although the subpoenas had been served, directing his attendance on Monday, yet, that he did not leave his home until Wednesday; and that after travelling to Avon, he digressed from the road into another town, upon private business. He further stated that no fees had been tendered to him at the time of the service of the subpoenas, and that he had not any money himself to bear his expenses. Under these latter circumstances, he was discharged by the court. Thus much for the first of the "Morgan trials."

I am, sir, very respectfully, yours, &c.

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## LETTER XIX.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 15, 1832.

SIR,

On the 22d of November, Governor Clinton had received a long letter from Mr. Talbot, of the Batavia committee, expressing the satisfaction of the committee at the course that

had been pursued by him. "If," says this letter, "we have not sooner addressed you on this subject, it has not been for want of a desire to assure you of our regard and respect for you as our chief magistrate. I had no hesitation in assuring my friends here, that a violation of the laws would in every case meet with your strong and marked censure, and that all would be done by you that we had a right to expect. I well remember the course you pursued when mayor of New-York, and I felt then, as I do now, perfectly confident that neither your personal influence, nor your official authority, could be brought to the aid of any improper plan, whatever was the object of those concerned." Regretting that he was not able to furnish any accurate information as to the fate of Morgan, Mr. Talbot, the writer, then proceeds to detail to the Governor, an account of the mission of the persons who had been sent to make inquiries along the ridge road, together with their discoveries, tracing Morgan, as they supposed, into Canada, or to fort Niagara. Repeating the stories that had been circulated in Canada, that Morgan had been murdered by having his throat cut, by two ruffians in disguise, (his body having then been sunk in the river,) the writer yet expresses his doubts, from the number and respectability of the persons concerned in the abduction, as to the fact of the murder. Some circumstances are then stated which induced the writer to believe that Morgan was confined somewhere in the Canadas. A man had been seen, by accident, who was chained, and who cried for food, which was refused, while he was plied with drink, &c. Another report was, that Morgan was confined at Quebec, on a charge of treasonable practices, &c. After speaking of several legal steps that had been taken, and referring to the conduct of the sheriffs of Genesee and Niagara, the letter proceeds—"We shall very soon make further attempts to elucidate this dark and singular transaction. The election for a few

“days diverted attention from it, but the public excitement rather increases than abates.” “Perhaps I have written more than is proper, or agreeable to you. I will, for myself, assure you that the second proclamation gave great satisfaction, and served at once to enable your friends to put down every idle suggestion relating to your views of the transaction.”

To this letter, of which I have presented as ample an abridgement as the case requires, the subjoined answer was returned by Governor Clinton:—

*“Albany, 8th January, 1827.*

“SIR,

“I have received your letter of November, in behalf of the Batavia committee, appointed in the case of Morgan, and I deeply regret the whole transaction, as well as the failure of the attempts to restore him to his family. I am not, however, without hopes of ultimate success. If in a state of duress, he is probably detained in one of the Canadas, under false pretexts. I have written to the Governor of Lower Canada, at Quebec, and of Upper Canada, at York, stating his abduction, and requesting their humane interpositions in his behalf, if confined in any of the forts or prisons under their government, and I strongly anticipate favorable results. There are a number of circumstances which induce me to concur with you in the opinion you express, against his being murdered. I do not think that the men engaged in the conspiracy, if as respectable as you intimate, would stain their hands with blood; and if bent on such a horrid crime, we can hardly suppose that they would carry Morgan to such a distance, and expose themselves so unnecessarily to detection. But, when the demon of fanaticism is at work, there is no knowing to what extent of mischief and turpitude he may lead his disciples.

"I am persuaded, however, that the body of Freemasons, so far from having any participation in this affair, or giving any countenance to it, reprobate it as a most unjustifiable act, repugnant to the principles, and abhorrent to the doctrines of the fraternity. I know that Freemasonry, properly understood, and faithfully attended to, is friendly to religion, morality, liberty, and good government; and I shall never shrink, under any state of excitement, or any extent of misrepresentation, from bearing testimony in favor of the purity of an institution, which can boast of a Washington, a Franklin, and a Lafayette, as distinguished members, and which inculcates no principles, and authorises no acts, that are not in perfect accordance with good morals, civil liberty, and entire obedience to government and the laws. It is no more responsible for the acts of unworthy members, than any other association, or institution. Without intending, in the remotest degree, a comparison, or improper allusion, I might ask whether we ought to revile our holy religion, because Peter denied, and Judas betrayed?

"It appears that the abduction of Morgan from Canandaigua, took place on the 12th of September, and that the Batavia meeting was held on the 25th. The affidavits published by the committee of that meeting, sufficiently indicated the perpetration of the outrage; and it is to be regretted that a judicial accusation did not immediately take place, as it might, at that early period, have led to the discovery of Morgan. On the 6th of October, I received your communication, and on the next day issued the first proclamation. I took it for granted that the offenders would be apprehended, and that Morgan would be discovered and restored. But seeing, accidentally, in a Batavia newspaper, that these expectations were not realized, I issued, on the 26th of October, another proclamation, offering specific rewards. I regret that, after the first communication, I



did not hear from you until the 22d of November. In saying this, I do not intend the least blame,—the confusion and derangement which must necessarily have grown out of such an unprecedented and abominable transaction, must present a sufficient apology for any omission on the part of those who have been meritoriously engaged in detecting and punishing an outrage which would scarcely be believed were it not so well authenticated.

“I observe some imputations in your letter on the conduct of the sheriffs of Genesee and Niagara. If any accusations, supported by testimony, are presented, I shall take due notice of them.

“I pray you to accept for yourself, and to present to the other members of the committee, my acknowledgments of the laudable performance of your and their duties, as good and faithful citizens, in a case so greatly to be deprecated, and which certainly demanded the energetic interposition of the friends of liberty and good government.

“I am, &c.

“DE WITT CLINTON.

“THEODORE F. TALBOT, Esq., Batavia.”

I trust, sir, that in the perusal of the preceding letter, you will bear in mind that neither the distinguished writer, nor other members of the masonic fraternity, at a distance, was then aware of the extent to which the Masons of the west were inculpated, directly or indirectly, in the transactions in question. Nor had the controlling bodies of the order been convened, or taken any part in the premises, at that early period of the transaction. But these matters will be subjects of after consideration. The following is a copy of the letter addressed by Governor Clinton to the Governors of the two Canadas, as mentioned in the preceding communication.

*"Albany, 6th January, 1827.*

"SIR,

"A person of the name of William Morgan, otherwise called Captain, or Major Morgan, resided, for some time, with his family, in Batavia, in this state. He is said to have been a native of Virginia, and to have carried on, at one time, the business of a brewer, at York, in Upper Canada. He is described as about five feet eight inches high—well built—light complexion, and between forty-five and fifty years of age. During the last year he put a manuscript into the hands of a printer in Batavia, purporting to be a promulgation of the secrets of Freemasonry. This was passed over by the great body of that fraternity, without notice, and with silent contempt; but a few desperate fanatics engaged in a plan of carrying him off, and, on the 12th of September last, they took him from Canandaigua by force, as it is understood, and conveyed him to the Niagara river, from whence it is supposed that he was taken to his Britannic Majesty's dominions. Some of the offenders have been apprehended and punished, but no intelligence has been obtained respecting Morgan, since his abduction. I have, therefore, to appeal to your justice and humanity on this occasion, and to request your excellency to cause inquiry to be made respecting him, and, if he is forcibly detained, to direct his liberation, and to communicate to me the results. It is conjectured that he is confined in some fort or prison, under false pretences.

"I am persuaded that no apology is necessary for this intrusion on your time and attention; and, permit me to assure you, that I shall always be happy to reciprocate your humane interposition, and to evince the high respect with which

"I have the honor to be, &c.

"DE WITT CLINTON.

"The EARL OF DALHOUSIE, Quebec."

A duplicate of the same letter was, at the same time, addressed to Sir Peregrine Maitland, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. Answers from both these functionaries were received in due season, which, as the originals are before me, I will transcribe for your perusal :—

“ CASTLE OF ST. LEWIS,

“ *Quebec, 25th January, 1827.*

“ SIR,

“ I have had the honor of receiving your excellency's of 6th January, instant, making inquiry for a person of the name of Morgan.

“ It will give me much pleasure to comply with your wishes on this subject, and no time shall be lost in sending you whatever information I can obtain. At present I can only say, that nothing has been heard of him in this province of Lower Canada ; and I may add that I am very certain he cannot be detained in any clandestine manner in the Upper Province. The information, however, which I have required of Sir Peregrine Maitland, shall be transmitted, so soon as I receive it.

“ It gives me much pleasure to seize this opportunity to express to your excellency the high respect and esteem with which

“ I have the honor to be

“ Your excellency's most obedient,

“ Humble servant,

“ DALHOUSIE.

“ His excellency

“ DE WITT CLINTON, Esq. &c. &c. &c.”

The annexed letter is the reply of the Governor of the Upper Province :—

"UPPER CANADA,

"York, 5th February, 1827.

IR,

"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your excellency's communication of the — ultimo, and to acquaint you, that, to meet your desire, I have directed a notice to be inserted in the Government Gazette, offering a reward of £50, for any satisfactory information that shall be given respecting William Morgan. Should any thing in the future be learned, regarding him, I shall not fail to communicate it to your excellency.

"I have the honor to be, sir,

"Your excellency's most obedient,

"Humble servant,

"P. MAITLAND, Lieut. Governor.

His excellency,

"DE WITT CLINTON, Governor of New-York."

In order, at once, to complete this correspondence, it will be necessary for me to anticipate the progress of my narrative, by transcribing for your perusal, in this place, the substance of the communication from the Earl of Dalhousie:—

"CASTLE OF ST. LEWIS,

"Quebec, 31st March, 1827.

"I have the honor to inform your excellency that having communicated to the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, the substance of your communication, and requested him to communicate to me any information he could obtain, respecting William Morgan, the person mentioned in your communication of the 6th January last, the Lieutenant Governor has informed me that no such information has been received, although he had caused a reward to be offered, on the part of the government, for any authentic intelligence respecting that individual. He further informs me

that the report of Morgan's having been heard of in that province, had been publicly and positively contradicted, by those persons who were accused of having a knowledge of that circumstance.

"I have the honor to be, sir,

"Your excellency's most obedient,

"Humble servant,

"DALHOUSIE.

"His excellency,

"DE WITT CLINTON, Esq., &c. &c. &c."

Neither the Earl of Dalhousie, nor Sir Peregrine Maitland, however, could well have been ignorant, that several Canadian citizens were, beyond a doubt, very seriously involved in the conspiracy. An attempt to procure an investigation on the Canadian side of the frontier, had been made early in January. It having been satisfactorily ascertained that Morgan had been taken into Canada, a member of the Niagara Committee crossed the river to Niagara, (commonly called Newark,) while a grand jury was in session. "He went before the grand jury, and proposed to furnish them with the names of witnesses residing in Canada, if the grand jury would agree to investigate the matter. After consulting together, they resolved to do so; and they were accordingly furnished with the names of several Masons residing in the town of Niagara, which is more commonly called Newark, who were believed to be important witnesses. The jury adjourned soon after. The next day the complainant was informed that after the adjournment of the jury, the witnesses who had been designated, had been conversed with; that after the assembling of the jury in the morning, they had consulted the district judge, and, thereupon, had resolved to do no more in the premises. The complainant ascertained that the district judge was a Freemason, and that the foreman and a por-

"tion of the jury were also Masons." This relation was derived by Mr. J. C. Spencer from the gentleman who was the complainant.

Very respectfully, &c.

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## LETTER XX.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 17, 1832.

SIR,

The result of the trial narrated in my last letter but one, gave no satisfaction to any body. Not a leaf of the mystery was unfolded; not a particle of doubt, upon any essential point, removed. The three most prominent of the parties indicted, had precluded any investigation of facts, by pleading guilty to an offence that could not be punished as a felony; while the fourth had only been convicted in consequence of his own vain-glorious boastings over his cups, being at the same time, as it was very soon made to appear, entirely innocent. The apparent indifference of Miller, moreover, in neglecting to come forward promptly, in a case with which he was personally so intimately connected, and his dilatoriness by the way, after he had started,—for it was manifest that in such a case he could have encountered but little difficulty in procuring money for only a fifty miles journey,—all these circumstances together, conspired to create a momentary pause in the public mind; and even to inspire a doubt in the minds of people at a distance, whether, after all, a mock-tragedy might not possibly have been enacted at the west, the *denouement* of which even Col. Miller, one of the abducted, was not very anxious to disclose. Such, I must have the candour to admit, was, for the moment, my own impression, as recorded editorially in the same number of the Commercial Advertiser,

in which the trial was published at length. Indeed I believe the opinion was very general in this quarter of the state, after the perusal of the trial, that Miller was then acquainted with the place of Morgan's retreat, and had absented himself from court only to avoid being compelled to testify to that fact.

But a very different opinion continued to prevail at the west. Morgan did not re-appear ; and circumstances were continually transpiring in the neighborhood of Fort Niagara, which daily produced a stronger and yet a stronger conviction, that he had been most foully dealt by. Many public meetings had been held before the trial of Chesebore and his associates ; and many more were held immediately afterwards, from which were issued resolutions and addresses of the most spirited description. The people were enraged that the punishment of the offenders was meted out so lightly by the court at Canandaigua, and the court itself was in some places denounced. The laws of the state were assailed, because, in the opinion of these popular meetings, no adequate punishment for the crime of kidnapping a free citizen was prescribed, and resolutions were adopted requesting the legislature to supply the deficiency in the statute-book. It was declared in a convention of Seneca county, that an outrage of unparalleled atrocity had been committed ; and that the courts of law had been appealed to in vain for the punishment of the offenders, which declaration was at that time untrue, as there had then been no cause for complaint upon this head. The court had fearlessly discharged its duty on the only occasion which had offered for judicial action, but parties are always hurrying to extremes. Freemasonry was now more fiercely denounced than ever. It was pronounced to be highly prejudicial to the well being of society—and it was asserted that the obligations which the Masons were under to each other, forbade an impartial discharge of their duty, "to unoffending citi-

"zens" and the community at large. A secret and invisible power was declared to have controlled the course of justice; and the sentences at Canandaigua were denounced as an insult to an enlightened people. It was at this period, when the whole country beyond the Cayuga bridge was in a whirlwind of passion, that *political* Anti-masonry dates its origin. At a joint meeting of the people of the towns of Batavia, Bethany and Stafford, it was resolved, "to withhold their support at elections from all such men of the masonic fraternity, as countenanced the outrages against Morgan." This resolution was followed by one at Seneca, directed, without exception, against all Freemasons, and resolving that "they would not vote for Freemasons, for any offices whatever." The ominous silence of a large portion of the newspaper press upon this subject, began now to attract the attention of the public, and a resolution was passed at a meeting of the towns of Pembroke and Alexander, by which the people assembled "pledged themselves to discourage the circulation of any paper, the editor of which so far muzzled his press as to exclude every fact in relation to these outrages." This resolution was followed up very promptly by the meeting of Seneca county, where it was resolved, "that the silence of the public journals on the subject was alarming, and that the meeting would take no newspapers which did not publish the facts and public proceedings respecting the outrage;" concluding by a threat to discourage the circulation of all such papers. These, I believe, were the first denunciations of the press, for its conduct in this matter. That there was some reason in their complaints, I cannot with truth deny; but the threatening spirit of the complaints, was not the wisest course to be pursued, in order to remedy the evil. A courteous expression of the public feeling upon the subject, might have done good. The language of menace, must necessarily result always, as it then did, in positive evil.



The more people reflected upon the trial of Cheseboro and others, the stronger were their convictions, that there must be important facts undisclosed. At the distance of New-York, from the scene of action, however, it could hardly be expected that we should understand the cause of this great agitation, as well as could those immediately in its neighborhood. But from the multitude of the popular meetings, which had increased immediately after the trial referred to, and from the many suspicious, though frequently contradictory and improbable rumors, which were borne along upon every breeze from the west, it occurred to me that I had perhaps formed a somewhat too hasty opinion, on reading that trial. On reviewing it, moreover, I was forcibly impressed with the fact, that, while Cheseboro and Sawyer had put in depositions in mitigation of punishment, Lawson had not done so. He had made an affidavit going to exculpate Sheldon, but of himself he was silent. He had been the chief agent in taking Morgan from the prison. He had gone with him to Rochester: it was known that he was at the Lewiston installation, on the 14th of September: and somebody had been most strangely transported along the Ridge Road, at the same time that he must have been travelling that very way;—and that somebody, between midnight and morning, of that day, after being removed from the carriage at Youngstown, had very mysteriously disappeared in the midst of thick darkness. It was known that Lawson returned from Lewiston, late on the night of the 14th; and yet he had pleaded guilty to all with which he stood charged in the indictment; and when opportunity afforded him a chance to speak, he had not broken silence in his own exculpation. He had not ventured the slightest assurance, to quote the language of the judge in his charge, “that Morgan had not been immolated as a victim to their rage, or “that he was yet in the land of the living.” I likewise reflected more seriously upon the fact, that they had pleaded

guilty by the advice of counsel not often disposed to yield, in any case where high intellectual and professional talent can hope for success.

It was under circumstances and impressions like these, that I took the liberty of addressing a confidential letter to my friend, John C. Spencer, Esq., of counsel for the defendants, stating the doubts and fears under which I was laboring, and respectfully requesting from him any facts, or opinions, upon the subject, which he might feel at liberty to communicate, without interfering with his professional duty to his clients. Before, however, any answer from Mr. S. could be received in due course of mail, a variety of additional circumstances, of a painful nature, had been received through other channels. With a degree of spirit and perseverance suited to the high object in view, and with an ardour which no discouragements could repress, the delegates from the several committees before referred to, proceeded again to Lewiston, immediately after the Canandaigua trial, to renew their investigations. They counted seventeen resolute men, and the number would have been somewhat greater, had not a portion of the committee, deputed from Rochester, where the excitement, on both sides, had rapidly assumed a high degree of exasperation, been deterred by the threats of the Masons from joining their associates on this occasion. The visit of these committees, since known as the Lewiston convention, was not very acceptable to the fraternity in Lewiston and its vicinity. Many of the Masons from that and the adjoining towns, assembled at Lewiston likewise, some of them armed, and all breathing forth the most violent rage, and uttering many vindictive sentiments, and even threats, towards the members of the committee. On one occasion they rushed into the room in which they were assembled, extinguished the lights, and heaped every possible epithet of contumely and rage upon those engaged in these praise-worthy investigations. Their object

was, clearly, to provoke a controversy, and thus bring on a direct personal and physical conflict. But the committee was composed of men of prudence, who suffered none of these things so far to move them, as to divert them from the steady pursuit of the great object which, with a single eye, they were pursuing. Subsequently a conference was held between the parties; but its only result was a shower of obloquy heaped upon the convention, by the District Attorney of the county, a royal arch Mason, who insisted that these gentlemen had no right to come into his county, to investigate criminal matters which he was competent to manage himself.

Having a case in hand of so much delicacy, and environed with so many, and such peculiar difficulties, to which may be added the strong inducements which many persons had to lead them astray, by false information, it may well be conceived that the task of the committee was one of great difficulty. Many of the idle reports with which the committee were perplexed, were also put into circulation through the newspapers, tending to confuse the public mind, and unsettle every opinion as soon as formed. One of these tales was, that an arrangement had been made between the Masons and Captain John Brandt, a son of the celebrated Mohawk chief by that name, to take Morgan from off their hands, and transfer him to the British North Western Fur Company; but the imputation was indignantly repelled by the descendant of the Indian hero, under his own hand, and in a manner bearing the impress of truth. Another story was, that Morgan had been taken to Fort George, on the Canadian shore, tried by a masonic tribunal, and executed by a young Indian. There was yet another report, that the Masons of Canada had been requested to take Morgan down to Quebec, and cause him to be shipped on board of a vessel of war, which request being refused, he was put into a boat above the falls, cut adrift, and thus hurried over the

cataract into eternity. None of these stories were true. But before the investigations of this meeting of the convention were closed, they received information, which induced them to believe, that after Morgan had been taken from the carriage, near the burying ground, in Youngstown, he had been carried across the Niagara, blindfolded, pinioned, and gagged ;—that he had been taken into the lodge in Newark, (U. C.) where, after much deliberation, the Masons had refused to incur the responsibility of disposing of him ;—that he was then taken back to the American side, and confined in the magazine of Fort Niagara ;—that he was there tried by a masonic council, pursuant to an express order from the Grand Chapter, and put to death in the manner prescribed by one of the masonic penalties, viz : by having his throat cut, his tongue torn out by the roots, &c. ;—that while the poor victim was in confinement, awaiting the sentence of death which had been passed, he had begged for a bible, and half an hour's time for preparation, which requests were brutally denied him. A number of letters, written by members of the committee, minutely detailing the circumstances disclosed to them, and the conclusions at which they had arrived, were published, which created a universal feeling of horror among that large portion of the people who had not taken sides with the conspirators, or resolved to believe nothing upon the subject. And yet, although the committee had received information leading them to such conclusions, they had not obtained one particle of positive testimony—nothing which could warrant an application, at that time, to grand juries for bills of indictment. They had themselves visited Fort Niagara, and ascertained what was the internal arrangement and condition of the magazine, which was a strong stone apartment, previously to the memorable 12th of September ;—and, from ocular examination, they were fully satisfied that some person had been confined therein : of this fact there

were many indications of a positive and unequivocal character. There were also marks of great violence having been used, as though by one in confinement, who had struggled to release himself. But beyond this, and certain doubtful appearances of blood, they could, as yet, prove nothing. That "a deed without a name" had been committed, all were prepared to believe; but by that time, those who would have gladly spoken, dared only to whisper in surmises; and even these half suppressed inuendoes, were, in some instances, given only upon solemn pledges that their names were not to be used. The prevalence of such a panic, among enlightened people,—a people unused to fear—is not the least remarkable feature of these strange transactions. It is probably to be accounted for upon the simple principle, that the apprehensions of men are always increased, in novel situations, when they are involved in darkness. The secret and invisible power of Freemasonry, was, at that time, a subject occupying all minds—the theme of every tongue. Its power, and its strength, and the extent of its influence, were magnified a thousand fold. Its secret meetings, however, were held, and, without pausing to reason or reflect upon the matter, as one deed of darkness had, beyond a doubt, been enacted by its instigation, people seemed to think that others might follow, by the same unseen hands, as often as it might be deemed necessary to suppress the testimony of one, or denounce vengeance for disclosures made by another.

It was precisely at this crisis, and, if I do not misrecollect, by the same mail which brought the correspondence of the Lewiston Committee, of which I have been speaking, that I received a reply to the letter addressed to Mr. Spencer. Without going much into particulars, Mr. S. wrote me, that, from the facts and circumstances with which he had been made acquainted, "there were strong reasons for believing THAT THE WORST I COULD HAVE HEARD WAS TRUE."

From that moment, my own course was decided. While halting between two opinions—weighing and balancing the different accounts daily reaching us from the west,—scarcely knowing which to believe, or, whether to reject the whole,—I had published but little upon the subject, until the report of Cheseboro's trial was received. Convinced, however, at last, that there was substantial cause for the excitement, my resolution was taken, regardless of consequences, to discharge my whole duty to the community, as a public journalist. But I also determined to hold the scales with an even hand; and while all facts of importance should be published, and the guilty denounced in terms of just and merited indignation, yet I was not to be driven to confound the innocent with the guilty, or to publish all the wild tales and inflammatory speeches, and resolutions, which might issue from excited popular meetings, or be poured forth in the columns of village newspapers, now starting up in various places, like mushrooms of a night,—determined, as was clearly perceptible, not only to ride upon the whirlwind, and direct the storm, but, in more ways than one, to turn the righteous indignation of a generous people, to private account. In one word, my object was impartiality and truth; and although the ultras, of both parties, have often been displeased because I chose to persist in pursuing the even tenor of my way upon this subject,—guided alone by the rule of right,—and although both have, more than once, attempted to make me feel the weight of their power, still, I have the satisfaction of knowing, that, with singleness of purpose, I have endeavored to discharge my duty honestly, and fearlessly; and I have many substantial reasons for believing, that the course which has been taken by the papers in which I have a deep concern, has been such, in general, as to command the approbation of the wise and the good.

On closing its labors for this time, the Lewiston Convention did not dissolve itself, but only adjourned. The last

act of the meeting, was to petition the Legislature, which was then in session, for aid in pursuing the investigation. A memorial was prepared, and soon afterwards transmitted to Albany, praying that an additional and greater reward should be offered for the apprehension and conviction of those engaged in the abduction and probable murder of Morgan, and likewise for the appointment of a special commissioner to prosecute the matter, and, if possible, bring the offenders to justice.

The letters from Lewiston, to which I have referred, were written at various periods, from the 12th to the 30th of January, inclusive. Like all the preceding developments, though clouded in uncertainty as to the facts, the tendency of these letters was still more to inflame the public mind; and the flight of two men, who were strongly suspected as principals in the outrages, just at this time, also tended to strengthen the public confidence in the general accuracy of those disclosures. The persons to whom I allude, were, Burrage Smith, and John Whitney, of Rochester—the witnesses, on the trial of Cheseboro, and others, who were so much afraid of criminating themselves. These men both privately left their places of residence, while the Lewiston Committee was yet pushing their inquiries on the Niagara. A member of the committee, from Rochester, was in Albany, on the 1st of February, and saw Smith in that city. Bowen Whiting, Esq., the District Attorney of Ontario, who, although a Mason, had so ably and faithfully discharged his duties on the late trials, as to command the universal approbation of the public, was likewise in Albany. The moment he was apprised by the Rochester gentleman, of Smith's presence in that city, he applied to the police justice for a warrant for his arrest. This was early on the morning of February 2d. The warrant was granted. But, although constables are very plenty in Albany, still, from circumstances that have never been explained, the warrant

was not placed in the hands of an officer until late in the afternoon. The officer repaired immediately to the lodgings of Smith, but the bird had flown. I do not intend to inculpate the magistrate in this matter ; but there were a variety of circumstances inducing a belief that Smith had been apprised of its being unsafe for him to remain longer in that capital ; and the fact that the magistrate was an officer in the Grand Chapter, did not escape the public attention, and was the subject of unpleasant remark. Smith and Whitney having each a family, and both being respectable men, doing a good business at Rochester, were immediately afterwards known to have fled the country. They came to this city ; and the rumor at the time was, that they were so impatient (or at least one of them was) to get to New-Orleans, that they were put on board of a ship outward bound, at the Hook—a boat having been sent nearly thirty miles, to overtake her. Col. King, whose name has already been introduced in the preceding narrative, and who must necessarily be spoken of again, fled yet earlier before the storm—he having left the district of excitement in December. Governor Clinton afterwards informed me that King called upon him, as he passed through Albany, and behaved very strangely. He thought him partially deranged. King applied to him for a loan of money, which was declined. He then requested an appointment, or a recommendation for an appointment, which he wished to obtain at Washington. This request was likewise declined. Leaving Albany for Washington, he shortly afterwards drew upon Governor C. from that city, for two hundred dollars, without the least encouragement or authority, and succeeded in getting the draft cashed. While at the seat of government, he procured the situation of sutler at Cantonment Towson, in the remotest part of Arkansas Territory, to which place he repaired, leaving his family at Youngstown.

Very respectfully yours.



## LETTER XXI.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 19, 1832.

SIR,

The eyes of the anti-masonic public were now turned in a different direction. It was known that the annual convocation of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter commences its sittings on the first Tuesday in February, in each year, at Albany. On the one hand, some of the leaders of the conspirators had declared, that their proceedings in regard to Morgan, had been enacted in obedience to the Grand Chapter ; and although the tale could not, by possibility, be true, inasmuch as that body meets but once a year, and it had not been in session since the February preceding the abduction ; yet it was unquestionably believed by many Masons, who had been led to participate in the outrage. And on the other, the greater number of the Masons were disclaiming and disavowing the transactions altogether. The Masons, however, were, at this time, divided into four classes, and it is proper that the precise distinctions should be stated here, that they may be retained and allowed, on all proper occasions, in the course of the narrative. 1st. There were the guilty Masons, and their immediate confidants, if not allies. 2d. The thorough-going Masons, who, though not actually guilty, nor previously aware of the intended procedure against Morgan, were still rather disposed to think, if they did not actually say, that the actors had served the traitor right. 3d. A small number of retired Masons, who had resumed their aprons in consequence of the spirit of persecution that had gone abroad, and who, as men conscious of their own rights, and their own innocence,

felt bound to resist the intolerant spirit of Anti-masonry.

4th. A much larger body of Masons than either of the preceding, who, having virtually relinquished the institution long ago, and ceased to care much about it, were now mere passive Masons, condemning the outrages, if they could be made to believe them true, as strongly as the most vehement of the Anti-masons could do; but doubting, nevertheless, whether it could be possible that any substantial cause existed for the excitement.

The most zealous, and I may perhaps say, unreasonable of the Anti-masons, believing, as they did, or affected to do, that the outrages had been sanctioned by the Grand Chapter, had no right, of course, to anticipate the manifestation of any special indignation against the conduct of their western brethren, in this matter. The first and second classes secretly took their own measures, as will be seen in the result. But the third and fourth classes of the fraternity, as I have classed them, and the great body of the people not belonging to the order, did look forward to the adoption of some strong and decisive measures on the part of the Grand Chapter, which should clear its own skirts, and proclaim its own innocence.

That lawless outrages had been committed in the name of Freemasonry, was known to all: that those outrages had been concluded by a fearful act, was believed by many: and that, at least, three members of the fraternity had been convicted, and were at that time in prison for their crimes, was a matter of public judicial record. Equally well known was the fact, that the local masonic bodies to which those convicted brethren belonged, had taken no measures to manifest their displeasure at their conduct. Under circumstances like these, what more just or natural expectation could have been entertained by an anxious public, than that the highest masonic body in the state, if guiltless in all these matters, and in no wise cognizant thereof, should, at

once, have assumed an attitude that would have vindicated its members from all suspicion? It is true that the Grand Chapter had no right to expel the offenders from the respective chapters to which they belonged. Nor, in regard to those who were Masons of three degrees only, had they any jurisdiction in the case. But they had power to institute the most rigid investigation into the causes of the excitement at the west, and they were not destitute of funds. They had power to demand explanations from the local chapters, and require them to show cause why their charters should not be taken from them. They had power, and means, for offering a heavy reward for the apprehension and conviction of the offenders;—and they had among them the ability, if the disposition had existed, to put forth a manifesto, showing, at least, that they were in earnest in any disclaimer they might proclaim to the public. Did they do so? Did they do any of these things?—I am ashamed, and was grieved at the time, to be compelled to reply, that they did not.

The Grand Chapter met, and elected its officers; and in publishing the list, it was somewhat ostentatiously announced in the Albany Masonic Record, that upwards of one hundred and ten subordinate chapters were represented—which was an unusually large number. But so far from taking any efficient step in the great matter before the public, which was then agitating all minds at the west, and arraying friends, and neighbors, and christian brethren, and churches in fierce unchristian hostility against each other,—what did they do? Why, sir, they contented themselves, by issuing to the public a tame and spiritless resolution, with a preamble, setting forth some common-place and abstract propositions about personal liberty, and “the blessings of our republican institutions,”—admitting that there had been a violation of those rights under the “alleged” pretext of the masonic name. &c., and ending by a simple

disclosure of all individual or collective knowledge of the transactions in question.\* And this was all! Sir, it was a mockery. The crisis, and the occasion, demanded a document of a different stamp. Nor was a proclamation, of any description, alone sufficient to satisfy the public. There should have been resolutions of inquiry; an efficient committee of investigation, in whom the public would have reposed confidence; and a heavy reward. But none of these things were done. An empty "whereas," and an equivocal denial, was all that the Grand Chapter could do by way of appeasing a population of three hundred thousand souls, who had been thrown into an unexampled state of excitement by the conduct of members of the fraternity. Some of those members had been arrested;—they had confessed their guilt;—they were then immured in a prison;—and yet there was not even a rebuke of their conduct at command! I repeat, sir, it was a mockery: it was an insult upon the people. For of what value, can it be supposed, was such a disclaimer in the eyes of the public, when they knew very well, that there were present in the Grand Chapter, at that very time, in full communion, and passing upon this very resolution, some of those very conspirators themselves! Such, sir, was the fact. Need we marvel, then, that this preamble and resolution gave no satisfaction to the public; that it was viewed with disgust; that it was transparent, and was looked upon rather as an evidence of guilt, than of innocence?

Most heartily, sir, do I wish I could here dismiss this act in the drama. But truth requires at my hands a disclosure upon this subject, which, I believe, has never before been made, in its details, and which speaks in a voice of thunder against the masonic institution in the state of New-York. By the very terms of the boasted proclamation put

\* See Appendix, F.

forth by the Grand Chapter, it will be seen that it came before that body as the report of a committee. Two of the members of that committee were, the late Adjutant General Beck, and a gentleman who was then a distinguished member of the legislature, of great moral worth, and a professor of religion, whose daily walk and conversation adorn his profession. Believing, as these gentlemen did, that the outrage upon Morgan was highly alarming, and supposing that only a few misguided zealots had been engaged in it, they accepted appointments upon the committee, with a determination to do every thing in their power to bring to light the truth. The committee had two or three meetings; and the gentleman to whom I have alluded, but who does not desire to have his name introduced to the public in print, expressed himself, as did some others, very indignantly at the attack upon Morgan. One of the members of the committee, however, was bold to hazard the assertion, "that if Morgan had been put out of the way, he deserved it." But he was immediately told that such language could come from no man, who knew what Masonry was, and what the laws of God and man require. After due consideration of the subject committed to them, the committee prepared a report and resolutions, with the dissent of the member last referred to, recommending the offering of a reward of one thousand dollars, for the discovery of the murderers, together with a declaratory resolution, denying any knowledge, on the part of the Grand Chapter, as to the persons who had been engaged in the crime.

When the report was introduced, the resolution proposing the reward was most furiously assailed by some of the New-York, and the western members, and although defended by the late Gen. Beck, with my friend, and some others, **IT WAS REJECTED!** So also was the preamble of that report rejected; and a strong attempt was likewise made to reject the concluding resolution, but it did not succeed—

although the gentlemen who had introduced the report, considered that it had received its death-blow, so far as any attempt at investigation was to be undertaken, or serious exculpation made of the chapter itself. Why, it was urged, in the debate upon the first resolution, be unwilling to offer a reward for the detection and arrest of the offenders, and thus show to the world the sincerity of the regrets we profess, and the truth of our protestations of innocence? In reply, sentiments were advanced, (particularly by the dissenting member of the committee, who lived westward of Ontario,) which not only breathed the spirit of the wildest fanaticism, but were shocking to the feelings of the friends of the report. He was not allowed to proceed by the chapter; and my friend left the lodge-room for a short time. But judge of his surprise on returning into the chapter, to find that a resolution, granting to the committee of charity for the use of "the western sufferers," a term well understood, the sum of ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS, had been offered and passed *sub silentio*. Such an appropriation was without precedent or parallel. "Its object," says my friend, in a recent letter now before me, "I could not mistake. It was to give relief to the western brethren. I made some inquiries, but obtained no satisfactory answers. The next winter, while at Albany, I heard some complaint from one of the officers of the chapter, that the money had been drawn by General Gould, of Rochester, and that no satisfactory account had been given of the manner in which it had been expended."

Referring again to the course of the Grand Chapter respecting the Morgan affair, my friend remarks:—"The whole business appeared to me to be done to smother up the affair, and I felt very much dissatisfied with the rejection of the resolution proffering the reward. I so expressed myself in the chapter, and declared my firm conviction, that

“the course pursued was a death-blow to masonry ;—and  
“although no prophet, my prediction has been fulfilled.”

This, sir, is a revelation of truth. I submit it to you, sir, and to all others who may chance to peruse it, without comment, further than to add—for there are hundreds who have heard me declare my unbelief in the existence of such a spirit in the Grand Chapter at that time,—that I myself have only obtained the secret history of that convocation, since the present correspondence was commenced. This declaration is due as an act of justice to myself.

Very respectfully, &c.

## LETTER XXII.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 20, 1832.

SIR,

Wholly unsatisfactory as was the faltering disclaimer put forth by the grand chapter, yet the conspiring Masons and their allies, and those of the fraternity who yet *hoped* for the best, pointed to it for some time as a vindication, at least of the constituted authorities of the order. But it had no effect upon the public mind in the excited districts, and but very little elsewhere. Indeed at the west the excitement continued to increase, if possible, more rapidly than ever. Meetings were held in all directions; the people seemed to have relinquished all other business; and the standing theme of conversation, in the tavern, the counting-room, and the work-shop; in the field, and by the way-side; at home and abroad; was Morgan and the Freemasons. The disclaimer of the Grand Chapter was pronounced cold, heartless and insincere; and a degree of passion began to be exhibited which threatened serious results. Not only were county conventions called, but numerous meet-

ings were held in the various towns, and the most sweeping resolutions passed, often breathing a spirit of persecution and revenge against the whole body of Masons; denouncing the officers and ministers of justice; condemning the sheriff of Canandaigua for the lenity extended by him to the conspirators in confinement; and proclaiming an interminable war against every Mason, and, I may add, in some instances, against all those who should refuse to join in the crusade against them. Every term of vituperation supplied by a language that is sufficiently copious in epithets, was freely used. The resolutions proscribing Masons as unworthy to hold any offices whatever, were multiplied; the most positive pledges were made, that none such should ever thereafterwards receive their suffrages at the elections; and as the town meetings, usually held in that country in the month of March, approached, arrangements were made for carrying their resolutions into effect at the polls. The denunciations of the press were continued in the bitterest terms, and proscriptive resolutions, against all papers that did not demean themselves exactly as the committees desired, were sent forth in showers. That the people had some cause for their distrust and jealousy of the press, I am not disposed to deny. The truth will not allow me to do it. But of this subject hereafter.

The war was likewise carried into matters of religion. Ministers of that gospel which breathes "peace on earth and good will to men," were denounced; and although their walk and conversation during the whole of their lives might have been pure and blameless, yet the popular mandate went forth, that, unless they forthwith renounced their Masonry, they were no longer fit to minister at the altar. In some places the people resolved that they would not even hear a minister preach, unless he renounced the lodge-room. Several clergymen were dismissed—"the relations which had subsisted for years between the pastor and his flock,



"were burst asunder—brethren and communicants of the same church, refused to partake of the holy sacrament, so long as it was tainted by a Mason's presence—the dearest relations of social life were severed in twain—brother was armed against brother, citizen against citizen, and neighbor against neighbor. The groans of Calvary were lost; and the precepts of the Redeemer forgotten, amidst the universal cry of "where is Morgan?" And echo answered *where?*

The violence of these proceedings began to create a revulsion in the public sentiment without the boundaries of the agitated district. Good men, who knew, and felt, that it was "a blessed spirit" in its origin, now hesitated, paused, and inquired to what such things might lead. Morgan, it was true, was yet absent, and the mystery of his disappearance was as dark as ever. But there were so many contradictory and conflicting stories afloat, that the mind was literally "in wandering mazes lost." And what contributed again to raise doubts upon the subject, were the facts, that one man, as it was now on all hands admitted, had been unjustly convicted. Another, who had been strongly charged as a principal in the alledged murder, by the Lewiston committee, had been exonerated by two of its principal members, from any knowledge of, or participation in, the crime—or rather, (for he was now dead,) his memory had been relieved of the reproach by that committee. In addition to these circumstances, another member of the same committee, had authorised the editor of a paper at Batavia to declare to the public, "that no signs of blood, or any other probable evidences of the murder of Morgan, had been discovered at Fort Niagara." This was in direct contradiction of what had been understood as one of the principal discoveries in the magazine. And, in sober truth, what with these contradictions, and the honest, and sincere, and spirited denial of Brandt, of which I have already spo-

ken, from the testimony now before the public, all the material discoveries of the Lewiston convention during its January visit to the frontier, had been successively discredited. It is therefore not at all strange, that there should have been a pause in the public mind at a distance from the scene of the commotion. The history of the world forms, for the most part, but a humiliating record of the crimes, the vices, and the follies of men, arising from the indulgence of selfishness, or the still baser passions of the human heart; and this history is fruitful in examples of the dangers resulting from popular excitements. However just and holy may be the feeling in which they commence, the moment they obtain the mastery over reason and the law, there is no foretelling the lengths to which an excited populace may be hurried, either by the unrestrained power of their own passions, or by the uses to which their originally honest indignation may be moulded by the artful and aspiring demagogue. Mankind are essentially the same in all ages and countries, modified only by circumstances of climate, education, and their civil and political condition; and these advantages have never yet so far exalted the human character, as to raise the mass of men above the prejudices, and the passions of party, or to place them beyond the reach of flattering and knavish leaders. The history of New-England furnished a striking example of the extent to which a popular excitement can be carried, even amongst the best informed and the most pious race of men that have ever existed. Without recurring to the bloody annals of France, the gun powder and the Popish plots in England, furnish evidence to the same effect; the Saviour of Men fell a victim to a popular excitement in Jerusalem, which intimidated the Roman government;—on one day the people of Lycaonia could scarce be restrained from offering sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, and on the next the same people were excited to stone and drag them ignominiously

through the streets, leaving them for dead in the suburbs;— and, not to multiply examples, in returning to our own country, at a comparatively recent day, we have seen the civil authorities of a fair city at the south, paralyzed by a popular excitement, and its streets reeking with the blood of its murdered citizens. In one word, there is as yet no sufficient evidence but that any large mass of men, heated by excitement, no matter how created, might be so wielded by another Antony, as to be made gladly to apply the torch to the house of that same Brutus, who was the chiefest idol of popular idolatry one brief hour before. Cautioned by facts and reflections like these, the discredit that had for the moment been thrown upon the revelations of the Lewiston convention, although Morgan was still absent, and his absence unaccounted for, had the effect of checking the public feeling in other parts of the state, if not of causing a positive re-action.

But in the excited region, there were ample causes for keeping the elements in commotion. Several of the persons who went from Canandaigua to Batavia, to arrest Morgan on the trumped-up charge of larceny, were tried at the General Sessions of Ontario, held during the month of February, of which I am now writing, on a charge of forcibly seizing and falsely imprisoning Morgan; but they were acquitted, on the ground that they were protected by the warrant for his arrest. But the manner in which Dr. S. S. Butler gave his testimony, was the cause of dissatisfaction. This gentleman, it may be recollected, was the same who had been sent forward from Stafford to Batavia, on the evening of September 10th, to announce to certain friends in the latter place, the approaching visit of Chesebore and Hayward, in pursuit of Morgan, with the warrant. Connected with this individual also, was the still more important fact, that, on the organization of the grand jury for the term of the Genesee Court of General Sessions,

for this same month of February, and when it was probable that some further judicial proceedings would be instituted upon this subject, this Dr. Butler was appointed foreman. He was a Knight Templar, and a large portion of the jury were Masons. Of this fact the foreman was not slow to avail himself. To one of the jurymen, also a Templar, he remarked:—"A majority of the jurors are Masons: we have got the stuff in our own hands: our friends must not be indicted!" The promulgation of such facts as these, was calculated to produce fresh irritation. It was the first direct evidence yet disclosed, that Freemasonry was, at least in that section of the state, endeavoring to impede the march of justice, even in its very sanctuaries; and glad should I feel, could it truly be said it was the last. But it so happened, that the sheriffs of all the counties of that district of country, were at that time Masons. As the law of New-York then was, the grand jurors were selected and summoned by the sheriffs. And it generally occurred that large majorities of the juries so summoned, were Masons likewise. This was the fact in January, at the Niagara General Sessions. The Lewiston committee were then making their investigations along the Niagara frontier; and Eli Bruce, the sheriff, summoned sixteen Masons upon the grand jury. No applications, however, were made at this term, for indictments; but it will, by and bye, appear to what uses Mr. Bruce did bring his Masonry, at a subsequent period, in this very respect.

At the term of the Court of General Sessions of Ontario, just mentioned, the grand jury renewed the inquiries in the case of Morgan. They found a bill of indictment against seventeen persons, for a conspiracy to kidnap and carry away that person, and for falsely imprisoning and carrying him to parts unknown. These persons were James Lakey, a physician, Chauncey H. Coe, Hiram Hubbard, John Butterfield, James

Ganson, formerly a member of the state legislature, Asa Nowlen, Harris Seymour, Henry Howard, Joseph Scofield, Moses Roberts, Halloway Hayward, a constable, James Gillis, a respectable farmer, John Whitney, Burage Smith, Simeon B. Jewett, an attorney and counselor at law, and Willard Eddy.

The preceding details bring this eventful history down to the close of February ; and along with " the ides of March," came fresh disclosures of deep and awakening interest. There was a bookbinder, by the name of Richard Howard, alias Clipperfield, or Chipperfield, a foreigner, who had been strongly suspected of a participation in the Morgan outrages, but down to this period, no circumstances had transpired, sufficient to warrant his arrest. He was known to have been at Batavia at the commencement of the outrages, or at about that time ; and from his own conversations, and admissions, at various times, it was by many supposed that he was also at Fort Niagara, on the 14th, and probably a few days afterwards. I was told at Buffalo, in the autumn of 1829, of the manner in which some of the presumptive testimony, in the case of Howard, was obtained ; and as the same process was adopted in other places, and with similar success, it may not be amiss to note it in this place, as an evidence of the deep and universal interest which pervaded the community in that quarter, upon this subject, and of the persevering efforts of people, whether committee-men or not, to disclose, if possible, the hidden mystery of the fate of Morgan. With this view, in some villages, the inhabitants were, in fact, committees of the whole. It was so in Buffalo ; and many of its citizens were continually provided with pencils and paper, to note down every word, hint, or incidental remark, which they might hear in the course of the day, bearing upon the matter uppermost in their thoughts ; and with these memoranda they were wont to meet in the evenings, for a comparison of

notes. These notes not unfrequently reflected light upon each other, and in the case of Howard, had afforded almost sufficient matter to authorise an arrest. But an affidavit was now received by the committee at Batavia, which left no further doubt of the propriety of such a procedure. It was the deposition of John Mann, then of Buffalo, stating, that in the latter part of the preceding month of August, or early in September, and a few days previously to the attempt to burn Miller's office, in Batavia, he took a ride with the said Howard. While they were riding, Howard applied to the deponent to procure for him a keg of turpentine—avowing that he wished to obtain it in order to “switch” Miller's office therewith, it being his determination to burn that office, and thus prevent the publication of a book relating to Freemasonry. Mann declined purchasing the article, for the want of money, as he alledged to the applicant. Sometime afterwards, subsequently to the attempt upon the office, (the deponent proceeded to say,) Howard informed him that he did make the attempt. Having procured the turpentine, and purchased a broom at a store a short distance west of Batavia, with which to spread the combustible liquid, he set fire to it by means of a dark lantern, and as the fire blazed up, he fled. Some person, as he supposed, followed him, but he turned upon him, and, dashing the lantern in his face, succeeded in effecting his retreat. These details, furnished under oath by Mr. Mann, corresponded so exactly with the circumstances under which the fire must have been kindled; the walls having been swabbed with turpentine, and the dark lantern found near by; that an officer was forthwith dispatched to Buffalo, for the purpose of arresting the incendiary. But the messenger was directed to consult with some confidential friends at Buffalo in the first instance, and be governed by their advice. After a private consultation, it was determined not to arrest Howard, for reasons with which I am not acquainted. It was

believed by them, however, that he would not leave the place, but would be forthcoming at any after-time when he might be wanted—and the messenger thereupon returned to Batavia ;—such precautionary measures having been taken at Buffalo, as it was supposed would prevent Howard from knowing that he was suspected. Other information having been received by the committee, a messenger was a second time despatched to Buffalo ; but Howard had suddenly disappeared. A second deposition was now spontaneously furnished by Mr. Mann, of a yet darker character, going to confirm the suspicion, not only that a dreadful alternative had been adopted by the conspirators, at once to silence Morgan and the story of his wrongs, but that Howard had been one of the leaders in the tragedy. Mr. Mann, in this second deposition testified, substantially, that at about the time he heard of the abduction, Howard informed him that Morgan had been taken to Fort Niagara, and imprisoned : that those with him, [Morgan,] had drawn lots, to decide who should execute his masonic penalty upon him ; and that the lot had fallen upon him, the said Howard. According to the deposition, Howard appeared to be much distressed about it, but seemed to think that he had only performed his masonic duty. Howard held several subsequent conversations with the deponent upon the subject ; but although he gave him to understand that the penalty had been executed, he never afterwards spoke of his own agency in the transaction. Mr. Mann himself stated that he had felt unpleasantly in keeping such a secret ; and that, finally, after advising with his friends, he had determined to make the disclosure.

These depositions were of a startling character ; but, had it not been for the flight of Howard, from the eccentric temperament of Mr. Mann, who was well known to us in this city, they would not, unsupported, have made a very deep impression here. Mr. Mann, originally a blacksmith, had

relinquished the trade, and after a regular course of study been admitted to the bar in this city. Not succeeding, however, in the profession, he retired to the country, and resumed his early occupation. I knew him very well, in 1820-'21. Soon after he made these depositions, he became positively insane, and in a few months afterwards, died a raving maniac. His unfortunate end threw still more doubt upon the truth of his statements, as it is by no means an unusual occurrence for those whose minds are diseased, to fancy their best friends, or even themselves, to be guilty of the blackest and bloodiest crimes, but of which they are perfectly innocent. In process of time, however, circumstances enough have been revealed, to prove, very satisfactorily, that, even if he were crazy, so far as Howard was concerned, there was certainly some "method in his madness." Nothing further has ever been heard of Howard, except that on fleeing from the west, he came to this city, where he had before been employed as a journeyman bookbinder. It was on or about the 10th of March, 1827, that he absconded from Buffalo. In March, 1829, a man named Avery Allyn made an affidavit in this city, setting forth, among other things, that in March, 1828, he attended an encampment of Knights Templars at St. John's Hall, for the purpose of perfecting himself in the higher degrees; that during the evening, the Templar who officiated as Prelate, stated to him that they were certain of Morgan's death; that the person who had executed the penalty of his obligation upon him, had been in that encampment, and confessed himself to have been the one who gave him the fatal blow. Another Templar, during the same evening, made a corroborating statement to Allyn;—and both avowed that after consultations upon the subject, they had furnished the man money, and sent him to Europe. Allyn admits that he himself thought it was all right at that time, and for a considerable time afterwards.



When this deposition appeared in an Anti-masonic paper, which fretted its hour upon the stage in this city, and soon departed, I was exceedingly shocked. I had not believed, however wickedly a portion of the fraternity had conducted in the west, that the Masons of this city, or any portion of them, had been cognizant of the Morgan business, either actively or passively, or in any manner consenting thereto. The affidavit was so full, explicit, and circumstantial, that it wore the appearance of truth; and yet, the fact, that, by his own showing, the author had acceded to the propriety of the course of the Masons on the occasion referred to, and had concealed this horrible truth for the space of more than a year, added to certain other unfavorable circumstances which it is needless to mention, conspired, altogether, to make me question his veracity. He had, moreover, inculpated a gentleman in his statement, who, before and afterwards, I had the strongest reasons for believing as innocent of all knowledge or participation in the affair, as I am myself. Still, I was determined diligently to investigate the matter; with which view, I devoted a large portion of each day for a week, and entered upon a thorough course of examination and inquiry. The result then was, a full and entire belief, that not one word of Allyn's statement was true; and so I have expressed myself times almost without number. But since my present investigations were commenced, I have satisfied myself that I was unable to reach the facts of the case; and that, however Allyn might have been mistaken in some of his details, and as to the identity of the gentleman to whom I have alluded, there was yet essential truth in his story. I have recently been informed, in a manner which leaves not a particle of doubt upon my own mind, that Howard was in this city, at or about the time mentioned. I believe that when he fled from Buffalo, he proceeded along the shore of the lake to the village of Erie; thence through Pennsylvania and Maryland to Baltimore; that, on

his arrival there, he engaged a passage on board of a ship for a foreign port ;—that he was closely pursued ;—that on proceeding from his hotel to the ship, then about getting under way, he espied his pursuer on the deck of the ship before he had quite reached it ;—that he instantly changed his direction, unperceived, directing the porter to take his baggage away, as he had made a mistake as to the dock ;—that he jumped on board of a steam-boat, and succeeded in reaching Philadelphia, where he consulted a lawyer. Thence he came to this city. I believe that he was at St. John's Hall ;—that some unworthy Masons of this city,—but who they are, I know not,—did cherish and provide for him, knowing his situation and his crime. I believe, further, that he was taken across to Long Island, by the aid of his masonic friends here, and finally put on board of a packet-ship, bound for England, from the lower extremity of Long Island, at the entrance of the harbour at Sandy Hook.

I am, sir, very sincerely yours.

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LETTER XXIII.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 22, 1832.

SIR,

Gov. Clinton had written to Mr. Talbot, chairman of the Batavia committee, on the 7th of February, expressing his surprise that of late he had heard nothing from him. He mentioned rumors of further important disclosures which were said to have been made, and urged him to furnish all the authentic intelligence upon the subject that could be obtained, desiring also to know the views of the committee respecting any further measures that ought to be adopted for the discovery and punishment of the offenders.

Mr. Talbot, in behalf of the Batavia committee, replied to the above-mentioned letter on the 1st of March. In this

reply were enclosed the depositions of Messrs. Trumbull Carey, Timothy Fitch, and Hinman Holden, testifying to the discoveries which had been made by the committee of investigation at Lewiston, of which they were members, affording the strong reasons for believing that Morgan had been put to death, which we have already seen, and directly inculcating Bruce, the sheriff of Niagara. The deposition of John Mann, the substance of which has also been given, was enclosed in this communication from Mr. Talbot, accompanied, however, by extracts from a letter from a professional gentleman in Buffalo, who was consulted in the premises, and who seemed exceedingly reluctant to believe in the guilt of Howard, at the same time bearing strong testimony to his integrity and industry, and the general excellence of his character.

To this letter Gov. Clinton replied on the 7th of March. It was then understood that the report of the Lewiston convention, was in a forward state of preparation. In reference to this statement, the Governor, in his answer, which was addressed to Mr. Talbot, remarked :—" As soon as the publication of the Lewiston convention appears, I will come to a definitive resolution as to the course to be pursued by me. I wish you would expedite this measure as far as is in your power. As the next step on my part may involve important consequences, I hope to have before me all the light that can be furnished. Will you also favor me as soon as possible with the result of the Buffalo investigation ?"

The letter from which the preceding quotation is made, was followed by another of which the annexed is a copy:—

*" Albany, 11th March, 1827.*

SIR,

" In reviewing my letter to you of the 7th of March instant, I think it proper to avoid all ambiguity, by stating,

explicitly, that immediate measures ought to be adopted for proving and testing the allegations contained in an affidavit respecting a person criminated at Buffalo.

"In the affidavit of Messrs. Carey, Holden, and Fitch, it is stated that the sheriff of Niagara county, was concerned in the abduction of Morgan. I wish this charge to assume a specific shape, and to be accompanied by all the evidence that can be produced, in order that he may have a hearing, and, if guilty, be ejected from office.

"I should be gratified in knowing whether any exposition of this affair is to be made by the Lewiston convention, or any other body of men. As most of the information is said to emanate from Dr. T——, it would be important to have his affidavit, and such testimony as can be adduced, to support his statement and character,—both of which have been seriously impeached.

"I have only to add, that I am determined to use every means in my power, to develop all the mysterious proceedings connected with the abduction of Morgan, and to bring the offenders to condign punishment. Sooner or later this will in all probability be accomplished; but the sooner it is done, the better; and I rely upon your continued and faithful co-operation as good citizens, and useful members of society.

"I am, &c.

"DE WITT CLINTON.

"THEODORE F. TALBOT, Esq."

On the 17th of March, Governor Clinton spontaneously communicated a special message to the assembly, in the following words;—"Gentlemen: The abduction of William Morgan being an act of unprecedented violence, has justly excited unequivocal reprobation; and the apprehensions which are entertained of his fate, have produced general alarm and anxiety. Understanding that this subject is

“under the consideration of your honorable body, I have thought it proper to communicate to you all the information in my power respecting it; and this I should have done before, had I not been apprehensive that a premature disclosure might have interfered with pending investigations. If any future intelligence of importance should be received, I shall not fail to communicate it.” Accompanying this message were a considerable number of papers, comprising copies of the correspondence which had taken place between his excellency and the western committees, together with a variety of other documents relating to the subject of the outrage, and the several proclamations already noted. The message and documents were referred to the committee of the assembly on courts of justice, to which had previously been referred sundry petitions and memorials of the people on the same subject.

Two days afterwards, viz. on the 19th of March, his excellency issued his third proclamation, by which an increased and specific reward of one thousand dollars was offered to any person who should restore Morgan to his family, if living, or discover and bring to punishment his murderers, if dead;—and a free pardon was tendered to any one of the accomplices of the crime, who should make a full discovery of the offender or offenders.\*

At the time this proclamation was issued, a delegation from the western committees was again on a visit to Lewiston and Fort Niagara, following up the investigations that had formerly been made, but as yet with no decisive results. A number of additional depositions were collected by this committee, and a variety of facts and circumstances elicited, strengthening the former conviction, that Morgan had been brought to, and imprisoned in, the fort, and that there were many individuals implicated in this part of the

\* See *Fac simile*, in the Appendix.

mysterious transaction. Among the depositions so collected, was one from a man named Paul Mosher, to whom Fox had told the circumstances of his night journey from Youngstown. The story of Fox, as related on the morning of September 14, was widely different from his testimony on the trial of Chessboro and others. He at first informed Mosher, when he had received no caution of concealment, that there was a man gagged and bound in the carriage; and he thought he had heard him called Morgan. But Mosher also swore, not only to the threat of Fox's employer, that he should lose his place if he was not silent, but that a short time afterwards, Fox was made a Mason at Lewiston, for which purpose, a special lodge was called. In January following, when interrogated in court, as it has been shown, Fox swore that he heard nothing of Morgan, nor did he see any force applied to any one whom he took to Youngstown. The employer of Fox had likewise afforded other evidence that some transaction had taken place that was wrong. He had been heard to speak of sending a man down to the fort, as there was trouble; he had said, "that another man must be smuggled away, to blind the transaction;" and on the morning after he had spoken of the trouble at the fort, he had said, "he guessed that all was still enough." Another deposition was obtained from a Mr. Tryon, who had been at a ball at Lewiston, on the night of the 14th of September, after the installation. As he was proceeding towards Youngstown, between three and four o'clock in the morning, it being a clear moonlight night, he met five men walking from the direction of Youngstown, towards that of Lewiston; viz. Timothy Shaw, Samuel Chubbuck, Gen. P. Whitney, James L. Barton, (the employer of Fox,) and Noah Beach. Such a night-walk, for such persons,—for they were all men of standing in the community,—was unusual. The committee also obtained, at the same time, a deposition of Edward Giddings, the former keeper of the fort, and the

personage who has subsequently figured so conspicuously in the Morgan trials. But this document is an exceedingly cautious one. The committee had made another close inspection of the fort and magazine. Giddings, at this time, occupied a small ferry-house, near the fort, directly on the bank of the river, and sometimes entertained travellers. He had charge of the fort for several months previously to the 1st of August, 1826, on which day he left it, and gave up the key. He had left the magazine in perfect order. It was now deranged, and there were many decisive evidences, not only that it had been occupied, but that somebody had been confined therein; for the braces which had been applied to the door, and the marks of violence within, were very distinct and convincing. Giddings made full explanations as to the order in which he had left every thing in the fort and magazine on the first of August; but pretended that he could not account for the derangement of the various fixtures, and the appearances indicating that the magazine had been occupied by some one held in durance. When distinctly asked, however, whether he had not been called up by Bruce and Colonel King, on the night of September 13th, he declined answering the question; but added, that should he be legally called upon, he would attest to all he knew. A clue to the fact indicated by the question thus put, was afforded in the following manner:—"On the morning of the 14th of September, a party of ladies and gentlemen proceeded in a steam-boat from Youngstown to Lewiston, to attend the installation so repeatedly spoken of. Bruce and King were on board, and, among other ladies, was Mrs. Giddings. During the passage, one of the ladies familiarly asked, what he meant by going about at nights, and disturbing people, and calling up her husband"—"Yes," observed Mrs. Giddings, "they came too, and routed up my poor husband."

Many other circumstances, all tending to the same conclusion, were elicited at this time, by the committee. There had previously been a strong suspicion that Morgan had been taken to the house of a prominent man at Newark, a member of the provincial parliament of Upper Canada. The imputation became so annoying to him, that he published a letter, intending it to go forth as an entire contradiction; but it was so equivocal and evasive, as to excite still stronger suspicions against him. The committee, during this examination, arrived at all but positive testimony, that, although Morgan had not been taken to his house on the night of September 13, yet that the gentleman referred to had been called up late at night, and had seen Morgan on the Canada shore. They also satisfied themselves, from testimony too strong to be resisted, that Morgan had been taken to the Masons at Newark, who refused to receive him, and that he had been thence taken back again to the American shore. Here their direct and positive testimony ended. But in addition to these circumstances, and many others which it would be too tedious to enumerate in this place, the committee obtained a deposition from a medical gentleman of Upper Canada, a Mason, who had been informed by a brother Mason, that Morgan had been thus brought across the frontier, refused, and sent back; and that he had subsequently been put to death at Fort Niagara, and his body sunk in the river. The informant of this gentleman justified the deed, as being no more than was due to the expositor of the secrets of the order. The tale was repeated to this gentleman, in December following the outrage, together with the particulars of the execution, as mentioned in the letter giving an account of the first meeting of the committee at Niagara. The last informant, on being interrogated as to the state of mind of those who had been guilty of putting him to death, stated that they were much troubled; one of them had nearly gone crazy; and that



others had declared they would willingly deliver up every thing they had, could they only bring Morgan back. It was also added that the execution had been performed agreeably to directions from the General Grand Chapter, the funds of which were to be used to defray the expenses of fines, &c., should they be discovered and prosecuted. A member of the Genesee Committee, happening to be at Lockport, had been informed while there, by a respectable inhabitant of Niagara county, "that he had been for some time past working on the Welland Canal—that a friend, who resided in Canada, near the canal, had a few days before called on him, and exacted a promise from him to go to Batavia, and communicate to the committee that Morgan had been taken to Fort Niagara, in the night, put into the fort, and detained there three or four days—that they tried to get the Masons on the Canada side to take him, but they refused—that afterwards two ruffians had taken him out, cut his throat, and tied his body to a rope and stone, and thrown it into the lake—that he had been told so by Masons, of which society he was a member, and that he conscientiously believed it—that his name must not be used, or given in; for if it was known that he had informed he should fare no better." All this, however, was but circumstantial and hearsay evidence, and would be wholly insufficient to convict of any capital offence, even should attempts be made to obtain indictments. But as yet, however strong the suspicion, there was no proof to establish the commission of any crime, beyond that of the original abduction. Nor, after months of investigation, had it been ascertained that any thing farther respecting Morgan's person could be proved, than his getting into the carriage at Canandaigua. All else was circumstance, conjecture, and mystery; so skilfully had their plans been devised; so exactly executed; and the secret so faithfully kept.

But the conspirators took very efficient measures for escaping indictments even for the minor offence of the abduction. The parties suspected disappeared; witnesses were spirited away; and when attempts were made to procure indictments, witnesses often declined to testify, alledging that they could not do so without criminating themselves. I have already spoken of the first grand jury, after the abduction, summoned by Bruce, for the county of Niagara, of which he was sheriff. In like manner, each successive grand jury summoned by him, or under his orders, while he continued in the sheriffalty, was composed, a strong majority at least, of Masons; and the public prosecutor of that county was also a Mason, who knew all about the affair. Hiram B. Hopkins, a Royal Arch Mason, and one of Bruce's deputies, has declared that he had directions in summoning the grand jurors, to select at least three-fourths Masons—Bruce telling him at the same time, that it would not do to have all Masons, as the device would occasion suspicion. Hopkins states that when he had inquired of them how they expected in the end to escape detection and punishment, they always assured him they were in no danger, as they would have to deal only with Masons. At the April General Sessions of Niagara county, 1827, of twenty-one persons present on the grand jury, thirteen were Masons, of whom one was subsequently found to be an important witness, and another was afterwards himself indicted as an actor in the conspiracy. It was before this jury that complaint was made against Bruce, as one of the conspirators; and a scene of corruption took place on this examination, unsurpassed, probably, in the annals of judicial iniquity; too flagrant, indeed, almost, for belief. Every possible effort was made by the jury, to shield Bruce. Another witness desired to be excused from giving evidence, because he was a poor man, and the fact of his giving testimony, he said, would ruin him. He was excused! One witness, not-

withstanding all the cunning in putting the questions, actually testified to Bruce's own acknowledgement of having had an agency in carrying Morgan away. Questions, which had been prepared carefully beforehand, in writing, and furnished to members of the jury, and which it was believed would elicit the truth, were not allowed to be put by the majority. The revelation before referred to, which was made to a respectable man when at work upon the Welland Canal, was testified to before this grand jury. One juror insisted that the witness should name the person who gave him this information, but he refused, and nearly, if not quite all the other jurors present, sustained the witness in his refusal, and he was allowed to retire without answering the question. It has also been stated, without contradiction, so far as I have been able to ascertain, "that a series of questions, to be propounded to the witness, had been so framed, "that the witnesses could answer without eliciting any dangerous information. This must have been the case, or real perjury must have been repeatedly committed, on the investigation before them. All the important witnesses, to trace the whole abduction from Rochester to Fort Niagara, "were examined before this grand jury; the same witnesses, "upon whose testimony, bills were afterwards found in other cases, and convictions had. Thirteen of the witnesses examined before this grand jury, were subsequently indicted, "not one of whom protected himself on the examination, "on the ground that he should criminate himself. Three of them, were afterwards shown by the testimony of Eli Bruce himself, to have had a criminal agency in the abduction. Edward Giddings, in his published 'Statement of Facts,' says he was subpoenaed before this grand jury, "which much alarmed those who were implicated. One of them informed Giddings that he would go and see the foreman, and state to him Giddings' situation, that he might know how to question him, so that his answers might not

“injure others. He subsequently informed Giddings that he “had told the foreman what Giddings knew of the affair, and “that the foreman would put no question but what Giddings “could safely answer.” Nay, more than all, “while this “jury was in session, the foreman took Eli Bruce privately “into a side room, and was there with him some time. And “this grand jury, so far from finding any indictment against- “Eli Bruce, or any other person, drew up a presentment “to the court, that they had discovered nothing which would “authorise them to find a bill against any person, and also “framed and sent a memorial to the Governor, in which “they stated that there was not a shadow of testimony im- “plicating Eli Bruce, as guilty of, or accessory to, the ab- “duction of Morgan, with the exception of one witness, “who was so contradicted, and whose general reputation “was so bad, that they did not place any reliance upon it.”

This, sir, forms but a single chapter of the deep and wide-spread iniquity which has impeded the march of justice in relation to the Morgan conspiracy. And there are more to come. Is there, then, sir, let me again ask, any cause for special wonder that the people should have been excited—strongly and fiercely excited—while such transactions, under the pretext of a due administration of the law, were taking place under their own eyes!

Accept, sir, the assurances of my respectful consideration.

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 LETTER XXIV.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 25, 1832.

SIR,

It was on the 6th of March, 1827, that the memorials of the Lewiston convention, and others, upon the subject of

the abduction of Morgan; were first presented to the House of Assembly of the New-York Legislature. The prayer of the petitioners was for the enactment of more efficient laws for the punishment of the crime of kidnapping; for the adoption of more energetic measures for discovering the authors of the outrage complained of; and for the appointment of a special commission, or tribunal of justice, for the trial and punishment of the offenders. The memorials were, in the first instance, referred to the committee on courts of justice, but subsequently they were taken from that committee, and entrusted to a special committee, of which Mr. Granger, of Ontario, was chairman. This committee made a long report upon the subject, on the 4th of April. After setting forth, briefly, the extraordinary facts of the case, and examining the nature of the testimony by which they were sustained, the committee arrived at a conclusion unfavorable to the creation of a special tribunal for that section of the country, clothed with special and peculiar powers for investigating the transaction submitted to their consideration. They did propose, however, two important resolutions, the first of which authorised and empowered the Governor to issue his proclamation, offering a reward of five thousand dollars, for the discovery of the said William Morgan, if living; and the like sum of five thousand dollars, for the murderer or murderers of Morgan, if dead. The second resolution proposed the appointment of a joint committee of the two houses of the legislature, consisting of two members of the Senate, and three members of the Assembly, whose duty it should be to visit the region of the excitement, now including seven counties, with power to send for persons and papers, to inquire into the facts and circumstances connected with the abduction, and making it their duty to report their proceedings to the next succeeding legislature, that such measures might afterwards be adopted, as the liberty and safety of the people required. The

report and resolutions were ordered to lie on the table and be printed.

They were called up for discussion on the 10th of April, and underwent a long debate. Mr. Granger explained the views of the committee, and defended the report with distinguished ability. The friends of the report were opposed to the erection of any new legal tribunal, not only from the intrinsic difficulties that would attend such a measure ; but from a belief that such a novel court would tend to increase, rather than diminish, the excitement ; but it was believed that the appointment of a special committee for investigating the whole matter, clothed with the power of the legislature, would inspire the people with confidence, and allay the agitation of the public mind. The resolutions were strongly opposed by several gentlemen, among the foremost of whom, were, Mr. Bucklin, of Jefferson ; Mr. Moseley, of Onondaga ; and Gen. Root, of Delaware. The leading objections were, that the amount of money proposed to be offered as a reward, would open the tribunals of justice in the excited region, to such scenes of fraud and perjury, stimulated by cupidity, and pushed on by the frenzy of the public mind, as would jeopard the best interests of the people, and involve alike, the innocent in ruin with the guilty. It was not believed, by the opponents of the report, that the case was beyond the reach of the laws ; and they contended that a committee of the legislature might as well be sent in pursuit of every absconding murderer, as in search of those who had abducted Morgan,—for, as yet, there was no testimony of his having been killed. Neither the committee in the report, nor did its chairman in opening the debate, make any allusion to the institution of Freemasonry, as having been the cause of the outrage, and the consequent excitement. But the institution was introduced by the opponents of the report ; and Mr. Bucklin made several statements that had an evident effect against its adoption.

Being himself a Mason, Mr. B. stated, as an evidence of the dangerous extent to which the excitement had arisen, that but a few days before, a gentleman from the west, understanding that he was one of the order, plainly told him that he must of course know all about the Morgan business; whether he was alive; and, if so, where he was. Mr. B. likewise commented upon the inflammatory and violent proceedings of the public meetings at the west, among which had been several assemblages of the ladies, who had resolved that their daughters should never be married to Freemasons. He further stated, that, as chairman of a committee to whom the subject of public executions had been referred, he had reported a bill, directing the sentence of the law, in capital cases, to be carried into effect in private. For this report he was directly threatened, by letters from Batavia, the writers of which conceived the bill to be a project for shielding Freemasons from the disgrace of being hung in public! Mr. Granger strongly deprecated the course of the debate. The committee had hoped that the resolutions would be acted upon without reference to the character or conduct of any secret association. They had denounced none: they had spoken of the transaction as a violation of the rights of a citizen, owing allegiance to, and protected by, the government, and he expressed his surprise and regret at the course that had been pursued by the gentlemen opposed to him. The result was the rejection of the report, by a vote of 74 to 23.

On the 16th of April, however, an act was passed making the abduction or kidnapping of any person felony, which had only been a misdemeanor before; and the punishment was prescribed to be imprisonment in the state prison for a term of not exceeding fourteen years. Thus ends the legislative history of Anti-masonry for the first year.

Towards the close of the month of March, the storm raged so fiercely against the fraternity, that a few of its

members at Batavia, offered a reward of one hundred dollars, for the discovery of those who had set fire to Miller's office. This prodigious effort was made seven months after the transaction, and after those in the secret very well knew that the offender was safe from arrest.

A grand jury assembled again in Monroe county, in this same month of March. A majority of them were Masons, and the efforts for a farther investigation of the conspiracy, were so faint, that no indictments were found. At the Court of Oyer and Terminer in Niagara county, held in April, and also at the Court of General Sessions in the same county, for May, grand juries were assembled; but Bruce had packed them with large majorities of Masons. The conduct of the April grand jury has already been noticed, in anticipation. That of May was of so decidedly a masonic character, that it was deemed entirely useless to make any complaint before it.

At the Court of Oyer and Terminer, held in the county of Genesee, in April, 1827,—the Hon. John Birdsall, of the eighth Circuit, presiding,—came on the trial of Jesse French, James Hurlburt, Roswell Wilcox, and James Ganson, who had been indicted in October of the year before, for the outrage upon Col. Miller. French, Wilcox, and Hurlburt, were found guilty, and sentenced to close confinement in the county jail for different periods—viz. French, the officer, as it will be recollected, who served the warrant under color of which Miller had been carried away,—was sentenced for one year, Wilcox for six months, and Hurlburt for three. The whole history of the outrage, as elicited upon this trial, corresponds, with great exactness, with the account given in a former letter. It appeared, in addition to what I have there stated, that when Miller was taken into the lodge-room in the stone-house at Stafford, the door was “tyled” by two armed men. When Johns came in with a drawn sword, he advanced in a threatening man-



ner upon Miller, until, after expostulation, he appeared to relent, and gave the faltering reply heretofore mentioned. It also appeared upon this trial, that the money, for the recovery of which a feigned suit had been commenced in this most extraordinary manner, was actually pressed upon Miller's acceptance by Johns. It was proved, very distinctly, by several witnesses, that Ganson was regularly appointed the captain, or leader of the armed mob which went to Batavia on that occasion; that he was there in person; was also with them in Stafford, where they halted so long; and likewise at Le Roy, where, during the difficulties, as formerly related, Miller was rescued, and taken home by his friends. It was also satisfactorily proved, that they had no design of carrying Miller to the magistrate, but were clearly intent on taking him, to use their own language, "where Morgan was." Mrs. Morgan, an unimpeachable witness on the trial, testified that Ganson informed her that he knew the mob was going to Batavia. On her return from the fruitless mission to Canandaigua, in search of her husband, Ganson had assured her, that if she never saw her husband again, she should be supported; he said he was very much obliged to her for giving up the papers, adding, that if they had not been given up, Miller's office would have been torn down. It had, therefore, saved them a great deal of trouble and expense. Miller, he declared, deserved a worse fate than her husband, and would be punished worse, for they had two hundred and eighty men at their command. But, notwithstanding the testimony of this description, and the indisputable fact, that he was appointed the leader of the gang in the lodge-room at Stafford, before they proceeded for Batavia, Ganson was acquitted. Although there were no improper practices resorted to, either with the witnesses or jurors, on this trial, that attracted the attention of the court, yet the result excited more attention, and induced more suspicion, from the fact of the acquittal

of the man who was known and proved to have been the captain of the band, and the main-spring of the expedition, while those who acted a subordinate part, were convicted. As to the witnesses who were implicated more or less in the transaction, there was the prevarication and forgetfulness common to most interested witnesses, and nothing more. Ganson, however, though a high Mason, was a man of standing, of wealth, and of influence. Great efforts were made by his counsel ; and the presiding judge has informed me, that although his acquittal was a matter of surprise to him, yet he has been as much disappointed in the verdicts of juries, both before and since that trial. Two other indictments were found against Ganson, at the same term of the court,—one for a conspiracy with Daniel Johns and George Ketchum, to obtain Morgan's manuscripts, or printed sheets,—the other for a conspiracy with sixteen others, to destroy Miller's office.

Not the least remarkable feature of the Anti-masonic excitement, was the successive alternations which for a long time took place in the public sentiment. I do not speak, now, of the public feeling in the disturbed district, for within the boundaries of that territory, enlarging as additional towns and counties caught the fever, the spirit, once awakened, was much the same. It was speedily aroused to the highest point of excitation, when, after exhausting itself with over-action, it settled down into the solemn and deliberate purpose of prosecuting an endless war against Masons and Masonry. But at a distance, where the facts and circumstances appealed to the judgments, rather than the feelings, of men, the effects were different. With such, the thousand stories set afloat by those interested upon both sides at the west,—the one party wishing to increase and extend the excitement, and the other to diminish it, the perplexities in which people were continually involved, were very great. The Anti-masons, or rather that portion of

them whose chief object was to make a living out of it, were equally ingenious and industrious in the multiplication of masonic murders; and many were the suicides, long gone by, and forgotten by every body save the coroners who had sat upon them, or the editors who had chronicled them, that were now raked up in all their terrific details, and the half-remembered circumstances so warped and embellished, as to make it appear at least possible that in fact the deceased might have been murdered by the **Masons**. Stories of this class were greedily published, and as greedily believed by thousands of people, who never troubled themselves to inquire into the circumstances, or even the probabilities of the respective cases. On the other hand, the **Morgan** abductors were equally active in distracting the public mind, with regard to the absent victim of their vengeance.

The reluctance of the people eastwardly of the Cayuga bridge, to believe the worst that had been asserted, was very great; willing ears were consequently lent to every tale, wearing an air of probability, going to exculpate the accused from the more aggravated part of the accusations under which they were laboring, if no more. Various accounts of the existence of **Morgan**, were coined and put into circulation, and some of them given with so much particularity of the times, places, and circumstances, under which he had actually been seen, as also by whom, and so plausibly told withal, that the former opinion, viz: that **Morgan** was in fact living, and only keeping out of sight until the books could be sold, was extensively revived in the month of **May**. The account of his having been seen somewhere in the interior of **Canada**, keeping a retail grocery concern, though widely circulated, was not much credited. But there was one statement published at this time, which I am free to confess greatly staggered my own belief in his death. It must be recollected that the **Lewiston** convention had not

yet put forth its official report, as digested from the evidence they had obtained. Bruce, when first arrested, and brought before a magistrate, in December, had been discharged, because it did not appear, from the evidence adduced, that any such person as Morgan had been with him. The trial of Cheseboro, had not traced the absentee twenty rods from the jail of Canandaigua : that of Ganson and others, scarcely involved the name of Morgan, as Miller only was directly concerned in that transaction : Mann, who had made the disclosures respecting Howard, was now insane : other occasional disclosures from the Lewiston committees had fallen into disrepute. All the attempts to procure indictments in Monroe and Niagara counties, where the suspicions of guilt were fastened upon certain persons the strongest, had failed. And the manner in which those grand juries had been summoned, and the gross violations of their duty, in shielding the persons implicated, by preventing the disclosure of facts, and thus stopping the fountains of justice, as I have already stated, were not yet known to us in the eastern and southern sections of the state. Accustomed to the regular and harmonious movement of all the machinery of our civil and criminal courts, and the steady administration of the laws, in their purity and their might, we could not suppose,—the possibility of the thing was not dreamed of,—that the judges and magistracy of the land could be thus mocked, and the sword and balances of Justice herself, snatched from her hands, by the primary inquests—the grand jurors of the land—selected, as they had ever been, and were yet supposed to be, from the most intelligent and respectable yeomanry of the country. And when the accused had been again and again pronounced guiltless by these preliminary tribunals, if I may call them such, nothing could be more natural and proper than that we should again pause and suspend our opinions. It was under circumstances like these, that accounts, apparently

well authenticated, reached us from Boston, that Morgan himself had been seen in that city. Davids, one of his partners in the book concern, had been in New-York several weeks during the winter, and it was now said he was in Boston, where a large edition of the masonic revelations was printing in the Spanish language, with which New-Orleans, and the people of Mexico, were to be supplied. Circumstances were stated, with an air of sincerity and truth, that even Loton Lawson, Whitney, and Smith, were all secretly interested in the book, and that the former had encountered the imprisonment which he was then suffering, as a part of the scheme,—knowing that he was sure to come out of prison with a fortune,—while Smith and Whitney had departed for New-Orleans, to take charge of the adventure in that part of the world. But the most imposing part of the tale was the circumstance reported, that a gentleman from Batavia, a Mr. Brown, whose name was given, and who was well acquainted with Morgan, being in Boston upon business, had actually seen him in the street. Morgan, it was asserted, was partially disguised, and when accosted by name, by his former neighbor, appeared somewhat disconcerted at first; but drew his cloak close around his face, and turned off into another street. He was pursued for some distance, through various streets and alleys, and ultimately avoided a positive disclosure, by losing himself in a crowd of people. The editor of a paper published at Pawtucket, concluded the account as follows:—"Such are the facts stated at the time by Brown, of whom we know nothing, but have only the particulars from a gentleman who received them from Brown himself, and from others to whom he related them, in Boston and Newburyport, where he gave an account of the matter. *We do not hesitate to say, that our authority is respectable and authentic, and that we shall at all times hold ourselves responsible for the statement we have made.*" This state-

ment was fully corroborated by the *Masonic Mirror*, published in Boston, the editor of which positively avowed his belief that Morgan was in that city, living *incog.*, and preparing to extend the book speculation, as before mentioned. These accounts created a re-action in the public mind, which continued for several weeks, although circumstances soon transpired to convince me that they were but another attempt to deceive.

I have the honor to remain, &c.

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## LETTER XXV.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 27, 1832.

SIR,

The next step of this important history, was the annual communication of the Grand Lodge of the state, which assembles in the city of New-York, on the first Wednesday in June, of each year. This body has the supreme government and control of the lodges of Master Masons, as the Grand Chapter has of the Royal Arch; and I looked forward to the meeting with no little interest. Dissatisfied, as I had been, with the Grand Chapter, albeit as yet ignorant of the iniquity of its secret counsels, I hoped, on this first assembling of the Grand Lodge since the perpetration of the Morgan outrage, that a thorough investigation would be set on foot by this body,—the conduct of the lodges under its jurisdiction, supposed to have been either directly or indirectly implicated, inquired into,—and the charters of offending lodges withdrawn, &c. I had another purpose in view. I did entertain a hope, that, from my extensive acquaintance with the fraternity, and by the help of my Freemasonry, I should be enabled to penetrate the great secret

of Morgan's fate. And I accordingly devised such schemes as seemed best for the accomplishment of that object.

A day or two previously to the meeting of the Grand Lodge, I had the honor of a call from Eli Bruce. I was aware that he had been cited by Governor Clinton to show cause why he should not be removed from the sheriffalty of Niagara, for his alledged participation in the Morgan outrage. Indeed, although Gov. C. has frequently been censured for the deliberation with which he proceeded in this matter, as well as upon other points of this controversy, yet it is a fact, as must already have been seen from one of his letters, that it was at his suggestion, after he had seen the deposition of Mosher and others, that a complaint against Bruce had been formally laid before him. Mr. Bruce stated to me that he had come to New-York to make his defence,—Gov. Clinton having left Albany for a visit of a few weeks to this city. He presented me a letter of introduction from a valued friend, one of the most intelligent and estimable gentlemen in the western country, and in whose judgment I have great confidence. This gentleman spoke very kindly of Bruce; stated that he had visited the county of Niagara, and inquired particularly into the causes of the excitement; that he believed Bruce to be an injured and innocent man; and in conclusion desired me to examine the papers which formed the defence which Mr. B. was about to submit to the Governor. As Mr. B. himself joined in this request, I did so, and passed a very long evening with him. In looking over his papers, I found them materially defective, as a defence, and after a long examination of him, by way of question and cross-question, although he exerted himself greatly to persuade me of his entire innocence of the whole transaction, and his ignorance of Morgan, I yet came to the conclusion that he was clearly guilty of aiding in the abduction. Of the murder, or any participation therein, I did not then,

nor have I ever since, believed Bruce to be guilty. I believe he is naturally a kind-hearted, and an amiable man. We parted late in the night, and I have never had any conversation with him since. Gov. Clinton was absent from the city, during the whole time of Bruce's visit,—being then on a tour through Connecticut and Vermont, visiting the Farmington Canal, and exploring the valley of the Connecticut, with a view to the improvement of its navigation to Barnet, in the latter state. The hearing, therefore, did not take place until September. His defence consisted chiefly, if not altogether, of affidavits, the object of which was to impeach the character of Mosher, and to discredit the statement of Corydon Fox; but there was no attempt to explain the part which he himself had enacted on the memorable night of the 13th September, either by his own affidavit, or any affidavits from his friends. He was removed from office by Gov. Clinton, and the act was a righteous one.

I was not a member of the Grand Lodge. Those only are such who are actually masters or wardens of lodges for the time being, or who are past-masters of lodges. Of course I could only exercise my right of visiting it, without participating in its deliberations. This it had been my practice for years to do: and, full of hope that I should find that right worshipful body engaged in deliberating upon some efficient measures for an investigation of the cause of the excitement yet raging at the west with all its original virulence, I repaired to the lodge-room as usual. Little, however, did I imagine the reception with which I was to meet from a portion of my brethren. There were many old friends with whom I met as cordially as in former times. But there were others whose countenances frowned darkly upon me; while others, still, assailed me with angry and violent language, charging me, with eyes flashing revengefully, with being a deserter, a revealer of secrets, an Anti-mason, &c. There was much excitement and irritation in



the circle that gathered round me, and it was declared by one or more, that if they could only obtain copies of some of the articles which I had written against the abduction of Morgan, there should be a resolution for my expulsion on the following day. I repelled their upbraidings with all possible calmness, and assured them that if they would call at my office early on the ensuing morning, they should have the use of our files of papers to make as many copies as they pleased,—adding, that I would assist them in the search with the utmost pleasure.

On the following morning two or three of the brethren called upon me, and the files were examined. If, sir, you will pardon my prolixity upon this point,—a point, by the way, which, though apparently interesting chiefly to myself, is not altogether without interest to the public as connected with this transaction,—I will cite the passages from my editorial writings, which had given such mortal offence. By these citations,—and they shall be very brief,—you will be the better enabled to judge as to the temper and disposition of the body from whom I had been hoping to see a thorough investigation of the Morgan business undertaken.

I have already stated the determination to which I came, so soon as I was convinced that the high-handed outrage complained of at the west, had actually been committed, to publish, fearlessly, and independently, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so far as that could be elicited, of the whole matter. And I was likewise determined, that the voice of no Anti-mason should ring deeper than mine, in the denunciation of the crime. Accordingly, in the course of an editorial article on the day upon which I received the letter from Mr. Spencer, before referred to, viz: on the 13th of February, 1827, I held the following language:—

“ We feel it a duty to state, that, not satisfied with the  
“ newspaper accounts, we have written to a gentleman of

“ high standing, whose official relations enable him to speak  
“ with more than common authority ; and the answer just  
“ received, has made an impression far different from what  
“ we had hoped, or anticipated. In one word, then, although  
“ there is as yet no direct and positive proof of the fact,  
“ we have but too much reason to fear that the worst is  
“ true ; and that a few misguided, heated, and ignorant ma-  
“ sonic fanatics, have inflicted a wound upon the fraternity  
“ to which we have felt it a pleasure to belong, which it  
“ will require years to heal, and fixed a stain upon the cha-  
“ racter of the institution, which all the waters of Niagara  
“ cannot wash away.”

Much to my astonishment, the article from which I have quoted, called forth a reply in one of the gazettes in this city, in which, whatever the fate of Morgan might be proved to have been, the aggressors were justified. My rejoinder was prompt and equally decided in its tone. After giving concisely my views of the nature of the masonic obligations, my article, published on the 20th of February, was concluded thus :—

“ Away, then, with these sickly attempts to extenuate  
“ the conduct of the aggressors in this affair. Be Morgan  
“ dead, or be he living, there is no masonic excuse for the  
“ violation of the civil law. If he be living, let the ma-  
“ sonic fanatics who carried him off, make it manifest. Let  
“ them produce him, if he be yet within their power, or  
“ prove the fact, if (as they were then pretending) he is  
“ concerned in a plot to keep out of view until his fortune  
“ is made by the sale of his book. But if he has been put  
“ to death, let none ‘ lay the flattering unction to their souls,’  
“ that his blood is not in their skirts. What though he had  
“ proved recreant to his principles, and violated the oath he  
“ had taken to preserve the secrets of the order,—shall a  
“ band of men, in a moment of indignation, deliberately  
“ put to death a fellow-being, who, for the same offence, if

“ committed against the state, would only be consigned by law to the state prison ! It cannot be. Every Mason should set his face against such monstrous opinions. We repeat it, as a member of the masonic fraternity, that if Morgan has been put to death—God forbid that it should prove so—his blood cries from the ground for vengeance as loud as did the blood of Abel !”

Ten days afterwards, the mail from Washington brought me a threatening letter, which, having been somewhat celebrated from its frequent quotation by the Anti-masonic writers, I may, perhaps, as well insert in this place. It had the Washington post-mark, and was dated

*“ Washington, February 25, 1827.*

“ SIR,

“ Your remarks relating to the case of Morgan, are fraught with ill to the order to which you unworthily belong; and if justice is done you, you also will have your throat cut, for writing and printing certain things appertaining to our ancient science. You spoke of ‘ obligations,’ and their interdictions and exceptions. I can only at this time assure you, that my business only prevents my coming directly on to you; but the 4th of June will be time enough, you damned ‘ recreant,’ when and where you shall see ‘ a sprig of locust.’ ”

There was no mistaking this letter. It came from a Mason. It was conceived in the same temper and disposition which had conspired against the wretched Morgan; and it breathed the same spirit that was afterwards manifested towards me by a portion of the Grand Lodge, in consequence of the identical publications which called it forth. The letter was published at the time with such comments as its insolent ferocity seemed to require; and I made many unsuccessful efforts to ascertain who was the author. One

of the Morgan conspirators, and doubtless a principal, was at Washington at or about the time the letter was written, and he was probably the instigator of the threat, if not the writer.

But to return again to the Grand Lodge: after looking the articles over closely, the idea of arraigning me as a traitor was abandoned; and the gentlemen left me with the most positive assurances on my part, that they might at all times depend upon the strongest opposition from me, against all infractions of the laws, for whatever purpose, or by whomsoever committed. After these occurrences, however, I entertained no farther expectation that any efficient movement on the part of the Grand Lodge, to inquire into the western outrages, or even to censure the authors, would be adopted. But I was not even yet prepared to witness an open and unblushing grant of money, by the Grand Lodge, to one of the most active conspirators. Such, however, was the fact, as I have already had occasion to state to the public. The grant was not great, it is true; but it was large enough to determine the principle. Eli Bruce had asked for a donation of two hundred and fifty dollars, to make up for losses, in consequence of what were called the persecutions against him, by the Anti-masons. One hundred dollars were voted to him, and the residue of the sum was made up by contributions from individuals in this city. It is doubtless true that a portion of the members of the Grand Lodge believed Bruce to be an injured man. And the hostilities of the Anti-masons had been so indiscriminately waged against the members of the fraternity, that they naturally felt a sympathy for such as they might be induced to believe had been persecuted. But it was known that Bruce was laboring under the strongest suspicion, and that the chief magistrate of the state, who was also the highest masonic officer in the country, had ordered him to show cause why he should not be removed from the office

of sheriff, the duties of which he had so greatly abused. There were, moreover, in the Grand Lodge at the time, numbers of the leading members of the order, who could not have been ignorant of the real nature of the transactions which had disturbed the peace of the west, or of the relation in which Bruce stood to those transactions. Under these circumstances, when I saw that appropriation made, my own course was taken. **I HAVE NEVER CROSSED THE THRESHOLD OF A LODGE-ROOM SINCE.**

The Grand Lodge adjourned, without attempting even so much as a resolution in testimony of its own innocence, or by way of a rebuke to offending brethren. I pushed my own investigations, however, on my own account, and succeeded, as I then supposed, in a tolerably accurate ascertainment of the facts of the case. A friend of mine, a distinguished Mason, who had formerly resided in Erie county, on the Niagara, but was, at the time of which I am now writing, sheriff of Huron county, Ohio, while on his way to this city, lingered a week on the Niagara, for the sole purpose of satisfying his own mind as to this extraordinary case. Knowing the leading members of the order in that county, he felt a strong degree of confidence that he should be able to penetrate the mystery; and he did so, to his own satisfaction, save only in regard to the names of the actors in the closing scene. He arrived at the conclusion, that Morgan was taken over into Canada a second time, and carried upon the Canadian shore twenty-five or thirty miles above Niagara, near the foot of Lake Erie. He was there taken, at the dead hour of midnight, to the river's edge, and a heavy stone made fast to his body. He was next lashed upon a plank, which was moored along side of a boat. Four persons then entered the boat—one Englishman, one Canadian, and two Americans—and rowed out into the middle of the stream, where the cord binding the victim to the plank was cut, and the wretched man cast into the embrace of

the dark and angry wave, sweeping impetuously towards the cataract. Morgan, it was said, neither wept, nor spoke, during this dreadful scene: but the drops of perspiration stood heavily upon his face. Such was the relation, which, for a whole year, I so fully believed that I wrote to a member of the Lewiston committee a full account of the tragedy. But I have since been told that my letter was very charitably construed into an attempt, on my part, to deceive the committee, and prevent them from finding the remains of the body, in search of which, they were then sweeping the bed of the Niagara.

My informant, who is no longer of this world, visited New-York again, in the spring of 1828. We had a full conversation upon the subject, and he now assured me that he knew not what to believe, since he had no doubt, from subsequent investigations, that he had been deceived in the former relation throughout.

I am, sir, very truly, yours, &c.

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## LETTER XXVI.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 28, 1832.

SIR,

It would puzzle the ingenuity of man to devise a more injudicious and unwise measure, on the part of the Masons, than that which next demands my attention. It was so irritating in itself, towards a community, already excited almost to the highest pitch of exasperation, so uncalled for and unnecessary, that I can scarcely refer to it, even at this late day, with any patience. I allude to the public celebration of the anniversary of St. John the Evangelist, which occurred on the 25th of June. The stated festivals of the masonic order, are those of the two Johns, the Baptist, and the Evan-

gelist, both of whom are claimed as having been illustrious patrons of the order, although both were in "the celestial lodge above," many centuries before those below were dreamed of—but that is no matter. One of these anniversaries occurs in December, and the other in June; and it has been the custom of most lodges to pay special attention to one or the other,—rarely to both in the same year,—and still more rarely to distinguish either by a *public* celebration, and a procession, &c. The persons most ambitious for these displays, have usually been young Masons, and recently created lodges and chapters, at times when they could march forth with their new jewels and robes, their bright crimson sashes, and ample draperies of silk and purple, and the various other glittering insignia which go to make up a brilliant pageant. These recreations have always been very harmless, so far as my own experience and observation enable me to decide; and they would doubtless have continued pleasant and agreeable diversions, so long as the wisdom, and the deep and hidden mysteries of the order, remained undisclosed to the profane gaze of the vulgar.

It would have argued exceedingly bad taste, however, in a country in which all can read, and where the secrets of the inmost recesses of the order were hawking about at every corner, for a shilling, or twenty-five cents at the utmost, even under the most peaceable circumstances, for the craft to have essayed another public spectacle, where, if they could continue to look grave themselves, they surely could not escape the smiles and the ridicule of the spectators. But in a community burning with such an excitement as that which now raged over the whole country, to attempt to brave public opinion by such a display, disclosed a lack of wisdom, of tact, and a want of knowledge of human nature, rarely to be met with. The manner, moreover, in which the business was taken in hand, was equally ill-judged. Not content with the customary mode of announcing

the intended festivities, the notices were sent forth six weeks in anticipation of the period, and in a style of bravado, ostentation, and contempt for public opinion, calculated at once to arouse into action all the angry passions which prudence itself could at any time scarcely restrain. The fraternity were summoned to the gathering, far and near, "Knights, companions and brethren," to make up the array, and march forth in all the pride, pomp and circumstance of "glorious Masonry,"—as in times when it was alledged that the world were striving in vain to gain their secret,—a treasure, which they fain would have had the uninitiated believe as far above price, as the precious stone of the Talmud, which, being suspended in the ark of the covenant for the dispensation of light, illuminated the interior of that sacred casket with the resplendent beams of its own celestial radiance.

The effect of this procedure upon the public mind, may readily be imagined. Of itself it was sufficient to give offence to all those, who, from the recent occurrences in Batavia, now held the institution in abhorrence ; but, seized upon, as all must have foreseen it would be, and as it was, by those who had an interest in continuing the agitation, it provoked an excessive fermentation. On several previous occasions, rumors had been set afloat which tested the public feeling in a manner too unequivocal to be disregarded. The slightest indication that the Masons had yet some lingering designs against Col. Miller, had more than once brought swarms of the people into the village, with arms, as if for bloody combat ; and now that a large muster of Masons had been summoned, a single whisper getting abroad, however baseless in its origin, or sinister in its object, was sufficient to cause armed hosts to spring up as vigorous and bold as the Macedonian phalanx. It was even so. The appearance of the notice was the signal for the tocsin, and it was sounded with great industry, and incredible effect. Pub-



lications of a highly inflammatory nature were put forth; the most infamous insinuations as to the real objects of the celebration were published; and every possible effort that could be resorted to, without transgressing the law, was made, to excite the apprehensions, and the passions, of the populace against the masonic order. The object of the celebration was known to all. It could not be mistaken. It was designed solely to show the Anti-masons that they were determined not to be put down by clamor, or by what they considered a persecuting crusade against the whole, for the misdeeds, as all pretended, and many believed, of a few. It was in all respects pacific, and yet it was got up solely in a spirit of resistance to that current of prejudice, and that tide of popular opinion, which was rolling in against it with a swell that became heavier with each successive up-rising of the sun. The idea of another masonic outrage, by those who had—most indiscreetly, it is true—undertaken this celebration, was too absurd to be entertained by a man in his senses, for a moment; and yet it was asked in the anti-masonic papers—“What can be the object of calling so many Masons together? Why should the members of distant lodges and chapters be summoned? Whose houses are to be burnt or demolished? Who is to be kidnapped and murdered?” These questions I have copied from a Batavia paper of that day; and I might select many more appeals to the fears, and the passions of the people, uttered in the same strain. Nor were they without effect. A county meeting of the people was called to assemble at the court house in the same village, on the same day, and it was intimated that it would be advisable to come armed. Accordingly, at the time appointed, while the Masons were gathering into the village, singly and in pairs, with no other arms than those hanging from their shoulders, or perchance their squares and compasses, and the rods of the stewards, the extraordinary spectacle was exhibited of a whole peo-

ple, as it were, in motion. The number of Masons who assembled, was about three hundred ; but the people flocked in from all directions, and from distant towns and counties, not by tens and hundreds merely, but by thousands. Some were armed with muskets, some with bludgeons, and others with large knives. The muskets, however, I believe, were chiefly, if not all, deposited in places without the village, where they could readily be procured if the bloody Masons should attempt to run off with any good citizen, or cut the throat from ear to ear, of any of their own treacherous members.

Thus did one of the most quiet and peaceable of villages, in the midst of a most staid and intelligent community, present the extraordinary spectacle of a populace in arms, to the number of from five to seven thousand, for no other reason than because a few dozen Freemasons had resolved once more to appear in the streets with their sashes, their silk gowns, and their aprons, and to hear a moral lecture commemorative of the character and virtues of St. John ; inculcating the usual lessons of charity ; and concluding with an impressive exhortation to the members to illustrate by their lives, that exclamation of the Psalmist—" behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !"

These movements were not contemplated by sober and reflecting men, without great apprehension for the result. It was but too evident from the temper of the assembled multitude,—from the frowning brows, and flashing eyes,—that but a single spark was wanting to fire the train. A single hostile act from one of the proscribed order, would have brought on an affray that would have added a bloody page to our history. Happily, however, the day passed off without any serious disturbance. The Masons marched through the streets, and marched back again. Some jibes and jeers were uttered at their expense ; a waggon was se-

veral times rudely driven across their path, or through their ranks, to annoy them ; and a few stones were cast into their ranks without effect. But they conducted themselves with as much prudence, while engaged in their fête, as they had shown of the opposite commodity in coming thither, under the circumstances, for such a purpose. The Anti-masons held their meeting at the court house—such as could get in—for the whole town was filled ;—an oration was pronounced by a gentleman of the bar, and an address delivered by a clergyman. A series of resolutions were passed, denouncing the legislature for refusing to aid, by a special enactment, the investigation of the dark conspiracy ; a convention of delegates from the several counties animated by the excitement, was invited to assemble in the course of the following month, “to adopt measures for the public safety,” and fresh denunciations were uttered against the press. At night the multitude dispersed, and went quietly to their own homes—the Masons burning with resentment at the insult and contumely with which they had been treated—yet too wise to manifest it by any overt acts ;—and the Anti-masons cherishing the bitterest hatred towards the fraternity, and yet restrained from any deeds of violence, by that habitual respect for the laws, which is rarely lost sight of by any collection of our native citizens, and which illustrates the glorious fact, that as yet, there is in the United States no such thing as an American mob. Long may we be entitled to the proud exception. I am, &c.

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## LETTER XXVII.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 29, 1832.

SIR,

On the 22d day of May, 1827, came on the trial of James Lakey, Isaac Evertson, Chauncey H. Coc, Holloway Hay-

ward, Hiram Hubbard, John Butterfield, James Ganson Asa Nowlen, Harris Seymour, Henry Howard, and Moses Roberts, before the Court of General Sessions for the county of Ontario—Judge Howell presiding. These persons had been indicted for a conspiracy to take William Morgan from the jail of Ontario county, to kidnap and remove him to foreign parts, without the jurisdiction of the state, and to secrete and confine him there; and for actually carrying the conspiracy into effect. Undiminished interest was manifested by the public in the progress of these successive trials, and large collections of people attended, as in the case of Cheseboro and others, in the preceding January. Counsel for the people, Messrs. Whiting, (District Attorney,) Wilson, Dickson, Talbot, and Benjamin. For the defendants, Messrs. Marvin, Sibley, Penfield, Adams, Hubbell, and Barnard.

In sketching this trial, and the several others that are to follow, I shall, as far as possible, avoid minute details, and repetitions of facts heretofore related, although references to such facts will often become necessary. My object, however, will be, to give all such new facts and circumstances, as are from time to time brought to light, and all those points of the several cases, which will best illustrate the peculiar character of this great conspiracy, and the conduct of those who were engaged in it.

The trial of Evertson, named in the present indictment, was postponed, in consequence of the absence of a material witness; and in the course of the proceedings, a *nolle prosequi* was entered by the public prosecutor, in regard to Butterfield and Nowlen. The case involved the arrest of Morgan, at Batavia, on the morning of the 10th September, 1826, and his transportation to Canandaigua. Colonel Miller was the first witness called. He testified, (in addition to the particulars heretofore historically related,) that when he came up to the carriage into which Morgan had already

been thrust at Donald's house, Hayward stepped forward, and declared—"Morgan must and shall go." On being spoken to by Miller, Morgan at first paid no attention, and witness was surprised to see his appearance so much changed. His color had departed, and left an ashy paleness, and his eye seemed fixed and glazed. Miller spoke to him with more energy, upon which he started, and was partly rising, when he was commanded by some one to "sit still,"—upon which the door was suddenly shut by Danolds. This last fact was flatly contradicted by Danolds, in a subsequent part of the trial. Dr. Butler, the messenger who went forward from Stafford to announce the approach of Cheseboro and Hayward, and their party, to arrest Morgan, testified to the arrival of the Canandaigua party at Stafford, and his introduction to them. The doctor stated that he tried to dissuade them from their purpose of taking Morgan away, assuring them that it would be bad policy. But they persisted, saying:—"We have started for that purpose, *and shall go on.*" The witness said, that as he was then going to Batavia, he was requested to inform Follett and Major Seaver of their approach. He did so; and Mr. Follett expressed his regret upon the subject, as the village had already had trouble enough respecting Morgan. As witness was returning to Stafford, on meeting the carriage, he advised them, at the request of Follett, to suspend the procedure. But they were, most of them, determined upon accomplishing their purpose; and although the carriage was turned about, and driven back to Ganson's tavern, Ganson himself being with it still, yet the others proceeded forward to Batavia on foot. The driver of the coach from Batavia, whose reluctance to proceed has formerly been stated, was likewise called as a witness. Cheseboro rode on the box with him, and kept a sharp look-out behind, as though apprehensive of a rescue. He declared that Morgan should not be taken from them alive. He heard Davids (Miller's partner) remark, as they

were about starting from Danolds's—"they are going to "smuggle Morgan away." Justice Chipman, who had issued the warrant, related the circumstances attending the issuing thereof, and the trials which took place on its return, ending in Morgan's being taken to Canandaigua jail. All the parties named in the bill, were clearly identified, as having been engaged in the movements at some stage of the proceedings. Dr. Lakey was at his office when the warrant was taken out, and on its return; and Kingsley swore that it was by Lakey's advice and urgency that he was induced, against his own better judgment, to apply for the warrant. He had sometimes said that Morgan had stolen his shirt and cravat, and that the Masons ought to pay for it; but did not believe the taking of the articles amounted to theft. The residue of the investigations related to the imprisonment of Morgan, and his being taken from the jail. They were long and minute; but the testimony did not vary in a single essential point from that given on the trial of Cheseboro. In addition, however, to the witnesses formerly examined, there were some others, who gave a few additional particulars touching the occurrences between the jail and the carriage. A lady, not called before, heard the whistling, saw the scuffling, and heard the cry of murder three times repeated, together with a desponding groan that followed. She saw nine men, of whom Coe was one, while two were dragging a third along. A black boy, now first examined, saw six men put Morgan into a coach, and he also saw Cheseboro stuff a handkerchief into his mouth. George Ketchum, who will be recollected as the companion of Mrs. Morgan from Batavia, when she came in pursuit of her husband, was likewise called as a witness. He testified to the fact of his having known Morgan at Rochester, in 1824, and of his coming with Mrs. Morgan to look for her husband. While she was at the tavern, he saw Cheseboro, Coe, and Evertson, and was informed by the first,

that Morgan had been taken away the night before, by an officer from Pennsylvania. This was the falsehood, as you will recollect, that was told by him at first to the disconsolate woman; but nothing appears on this trial, going to show that Ketchum himself might not honestly have believed the story at the time. Mrs. Morgan was again examined, but her simple narrative remained unaltered. An important witness was then called upon the stand, from whom the first legal testimony was elicited, of Morgan's having been carried through Rochester to Hanford's Landing. Mr. Sibley, of Canandaigua, a silversmith, was called to testify to revelations that had been made to him by Seymour, one of the parties to this indictment. The witness objected at first to make the disclosure, as he was very reluctant to repeat the confidential conversations of a friend. His examination was very long, occupying a part of two days. It soon became evident, that in the regular progress of his testimony, other names than that of Seymour, would be divulged; and the counsel for the defence objected to this. The question was reserved for consideration, and the examination proceeded, the names of all persons not now on trial, being omitted. On the morning of the second day, however, the counsel for the people succeeded in obtaining a rule for the naming of two other persons, to whom the witness had alluded, as being concerned in the conspiracy to suppress the book. It appeared from Mr. Sibley's testimony, that Seymour had given him an account of all the measures adopted by them to get Morgan into their power, and the manner in which he had been taken away from the jail. Seymour was one of those who went to Batavia after Morgan. It was the second attempt to take him away. About two weeks previously to the time in question, a gentleman came from Batavia to Canandaigua, and consulted with Cheseboro and others respecting the proposed publication, and Cheseboro declared that it must and should be

suppressed. Seymour informed him, that after the man [Lawson,] had succeeded in getting Morgan out of jail, he was taken arm in arm, and led along a few yards, when he was introduced to another person as a friend, but under a feigned name. On reaching the street, Morgan resisted, and witness thought he was told by Seymour that he was bound and blind-folded. He was then placed in a carriage, and taken to Hanford's Landing, where he was taken out, placed in another carriage, and carried along the Ridge road to Lewiston; thence down to Youngstown, and confined in the powder-house of the fort—"and that," he added, "was the last they had heard from him." A number of other witnesses were called, who proved sundry particulars of the journey, such as the procuring of a carriage at Rochester, the collection of people at Wright's, &c. Platt, the livery stable keeper of Rochester, testified that he supposed he was furnishing the carriage for a party going to the Lewiston installation. No one had ever paid him for it. Wright, at whose house, not many miles from Lockport, it will be recollected there was so great a collection of people, also supposed they were all going to the installation. He confirmed the statement as to the carriage having been driven into his barn. Eli Bruce was subsequently called upon the stand, and after several objections to answering questions, lest he should thereby criminate himself, he admitted that he had seen Burrage Smith, of Rochester, on the afternoon of September 13th, but declined saying where he had seen him. He also declined answering the question, whether he was at Wright's on that day, and likewise refused to say whether he was acquainted with William Morgan. He admitted that he was at Lewiston on the 14th of September, and that he was at Fort Niagara on the 13th and 14th *or* 15th. To the question whether he was there on the 15th, he declined answering. He answered promptly the question whether he was there on the 14th, 15th, *and* 16th. He denied having ever seen



Loton Lawson, until within a day or two of his present examination, in the prison near by. The court excused him from answering the question whether he had heard any conversation about Morgan on the 13th; and in consideration of the appeal of Bruce to the court, on the ground that the transactions under discussion, were the subject of a complaint against him now pending before the governor, and also at the suggestion of the public prosecutor, that the grand jury had just then found a bill of indictment against the witness, he was excused from any further examination. I omitted to mention one fact stated by Sibley, viz: that in his conversations, Seymour expressed deep regrets at what had been done, and the part he himself had acted. But another witness was called, who swore that, in January, after the offence was committed, Seymour declared "he would go bare-footed and bare-legged to New-Orleans," through jeopardy, to do the same thing over again. A Mr. Perry, who was watching with a sick person, on the back street in Lewiston, where the party changed carriages, saw a man taken out of the first coach, and put into the one that drove into the street after it. He appeared to be helpless, as though intoxicated, and his head was bound up. Noah Beach and Parkhurst Whitney, testified, that a large party went down from Lewiston to the fort, on the night of the 14th; but they did not search the fort, and neither of these witnesses saw William Morgan.

Several witnesses were called for the defence, the principal of whom was Nicholas G. Cheseboro. His examination was very long, but the substance of it, as taken down by the prosecuting attorney himself, was, that there was no understanding between him and the defendants, "of any thing to be done to Morgan, other than the bringing him from Batavia to Canandaigua, and trying him." "The idea of Morgan's going west, originated in Canandaigua, after the discharge from the warrant; and Cheseboro did not understand that Morgan was to leave the jail; until near

"night on the 12th." He also swore that his motives in prosecuting Morgan, were to convict him of stealing, and thus to suppress the publication of his book. They were apprehensive that Miller would come from Batavia, pay the debt, and release him, and a communication was therefore sent to Morgan's friends at Rochester, informing them that he was in jail for debt. Towards evening, on the 12th September, several persons communicated to him the purpose of removing Morgan; they were the same persons who had been informed of Morgan's imprisonment, by the communication sent to Rochester,—and he, (Cheseboro,) asserted, that he had hired the carriage in which Morgan was carried off, and paid for it. There was no doubt of all the parties to the indictment having been more or less concerned in getting Morgan to Canandaigua, and into jail; but the indictment was for taking him out, and transporting him to parts unknown; and of the intention, or conspiracy, to effect this object, Cheseboro solemnly declared that neither of the defendants were "by words, significant signs, hints, writings, or in any other manner apprised."

The cause, having lasted four days, was submitted by the counsel without argument. His honor Judge Howell, gave an able and luminous charge to the jury. The proof to establish both the conspiracy and the consummation, was, he said, full and conclusive. That Morgan had been unlawfully kidnapped and carried off, was abundantly certain, and that he had been subsequently unlawfully put to death, there was but too much reason to believe. All exertions, praiseworthy to those who had made them, and honorable to the country, had thus far failed to develope the nefarious transaction. Exertion and investigation, however, ought not, and would not, cease, until this abominable crime should be exposed, and the perpetrators of it punished. These defendants, continued the judge, if innocent of the offence charged in the indictment, must not suffer for the

foul and black deeds of others. Courts are established to protect the innocent, and punish the guilty; and it is better that ninety and nine guilty men should escape, than that an innocent person should suffer. After briefly stating the evidence, and explaining the law, he gave his opinion, that the testimony, though abundant to prove abstractly, all that was alledged, did not bring the charge home to the defendants. The time of the court, he remarked, had, notwithstanding, been profitably spent in eliciting testimony which must ultimately unravel this horrible mystery.

The jury, after a short deliberation, returned a verdict of *Not Guilty*. Eli Bruce, David Hague, Orsamus Turner, and Jared Darrow, of Lockport, were at the same time indicted for a conspiracy to kidnap William Morgan. Orsamus Turner being at Canandaigua, was arrested, and discharged on a recognizance to appear at the next term of the court, and answer the indictment. His own recognizance was in the sum of one thousand dollars, and two sureties of five hundred dollars each. Paul Mosher, Corydon Fox, Edward Giddings, and Ebenczer Perry, were at the same time recognized to appear as witnesses at the same term.

In the course of the investigations before the grand jury at this court, it was ascertained that Col. King was at cantonment Towson, at one of the farther extremities of the territory of Arkansas. Smith and Whitney were also believed to be residing somewhere in the valley of the lower Mississippi, and the idea was suggested of sending a special commission to apprehend and bring all three back as fugitives from justice. The testimony produced to the grand jury, would have warranted the indictment of Col. King, as one of those most deeply involved in the great crime. But Gen. Whiting, the District Attorney, had special reasons for not wishing his indictment in that county. After the rising of the court, this officer entered into a full

correspondence with Gov. Clinton upon the subject of the additional disclosures, furnishing him with a transcript of the testimony taken before the grand jury, and suggesting the expediency of deputing messengers to the far west, in search of the fugitives. The Governor entered fully and cordially into his views upon the subject, and the trust was confided to Mr. James Garlinghouse, sheriff of Ontario, and Mr. Phineas P. Bates, the late sheriff. It being understood that King was in the service of the United States, at a military post, Gov. C. opened a correspondence with the War Department for the purpose of obtaining the necessary orders, to secure the assistance of the officers at the remote military posts of the west, and such other facilities as might the more effectually insure the success of the mission. Gov. Barbour, then at the head of the War Department, complied most readily with the request from Gov. Clinton, and the officers departed with every reasonable encouragement of success.

I am, sir, very truly, &c.

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## LETTER XXVIII.

NEW-YORK, March 1, 1832.

SIR,

The result of the preceding trial gave no satisfaction to the public. The acquittal of the defendants was clearly just, according to the evidence; but the excited multitude were bent on having somebody punished, and it is at no time an easy task to make the great body of the people perceive the nice distinctions of the law. There was consequently much additional clamor, and the excitement, which had not raged quite so furiously during the summer solstice, again bade fair to blaze forth in all its primitive fervor.

There were causes, other than the public disappointment at the result of the trial, moreover, that contributed to infuse fresh activity into the angry elements. Immediately after the defendants were acquitted at Canandaigua, a publication appeared at Rochester, purporting to give a correct and true account of all that had taken place at Niagara, respecting Morgan, from the moment he is lost sight of in the testimony as given by Sibley, of the confessions of Seymour. The facts detailed in that account, if true, were such as to harrow up the souls of all who read them. By some means or other, likewise, the substance of various horrible disclosures, said to have been made to the grand jury of Ontario, during the recent sittings of the court, found their way into the newspapers; and the public mind at once became highly inflamed. Those salutary principles of the law, which have been established, as well for the security of innocence, when unjustly accused, as to prevent the escape of the guilty, were entirely lost sight of; and popular prejudice, refusing to listen for a moment to the dictates of reason, could only perceive more distinctly in each successive trial, the power of the strong and invisible arm of Freemasonry.

There were other causes, likewise, contributing to keep the feeling alive, and even to increase it. The annual elections of this state now rapidly approached; and the opponents of Freemasonry were seen on all sides, at the west, arraying themselves under the new and singular banner of Anti-masonry. There is probably no state in the Union, where the elections are more earnestly contested than in New-York, or where the parties are more thoroughly disciplined—particularly the party, at present, and for several years past, composing the majority. But wherever the Anti-masons had carried the Morgan question to the polls at the town elections early in the preceding spring, with very few exceptions, they had been successful over both of

the old parties ; and by their dispositions for the coming contest, (the first week in November,) it was very evident they had no design of losing an inch of the ground already obtained. Neither of the previously existing parties, however, could at first be made seriously to believe that such a party as this, organized upon principles, and avowedly for the attainment of objects, wholly distinct from those heretofore connected in any manner with either our state or national politics, could obtain any extensive or durable foothold in the country. But pamphlets, and handbills, and arguments, and all the usual ammunition for the prosecution of an electioneering campaign, were alike thrown away upon the converts to the new party. To every appeal, the reply was—"Where is Morgan?" "Bring us back Morgan." "Down with all secret societies."

Eli Bruce yet held the office of sheriff of Niagara ; and the people, without heeding the causes which had hitherto prevented the decision of his excellency the Governor in that case, murmured loudly against that revered chief magistrate for the delay ; and the circumstance was used to the best advantage by those who had embarked their fortunes with the disciples of the new political creed. This weapon, however, was wrested from them on the 1st of October, by the appearance of the Governor's proclamation, for the removal of the offending sheriff. Fault had been found, most unjustly, with the tone of the earlier proclamations of his excellency upon the subject of the abduction. But with this there was, I believe, no complaint on that score : it was sufficiently energetic and decisive even for the most zealous Anti-mason. This proclamation set forth that the delinquent officer "had been heard in his defence ;" that "in the investigation of the accusation, it appeared that "it was completely in the power of the accused, if innocent, "to establish his innocence ;" that "in order to afford him "an opportunity for that purpose, the decision on the com-

"plaint had been suspended for an ample time, but that he "had given no explanation of his conduct." It also set forth the fact, that at the recent trials at Canandaigua, when called upon as a witness, "he refused to testify on several "material points, on the ground of self-crimination ;" from all of which the Governor declared his belief, "that he was "a participant in the said abduction, and had thereby rendered himself unworthy of the official station which he "occupied," &c. ;—for which reasons his removal from the said office was definitively pronounced.

But an incident of an unlooked for, and, in its consequences, of a most extraordinary character, followed so closely upon the heels of this proclamation, that the political friends of Governor Clinton, among whom I had the happiness to bear a part, were not enabled to turn it to the smallest possible advantage. On the 7th of October, 1827, the body of a stranger, who had been drowned, and washed ashore by the surf, was discovered upon the beach of Lake Ontario, at the entrance of Oak Orchard Creek, about forty miles from Niagara, on the American territory. An event of this description is by no means unusual on the coasts of navigable waters ; and in the regular discharge of the duties of the living towards the dead, in such cases, a coroner was called on the present occasion, and an inquest held, which resulted in the body being pronounced that of some person to the jury unknown, who had perished by drowning. It was thereupon decently interred. It was much bloated, and in a highly putrid state, when discovered. It was therefore necessary to commit it to the earth with all convenient speed. So far, there was nothing worthy of note in the occurrence. But the scenes which followed, were of a truly extraordinary character ;—presenting one of the strongest illustrations afforded in all history, of the easy mastery which an excited imagination sometimes obtains over the human understanding, and also of the general sympathy

which exists between different minds when wrought upon by the same causes. "When the common feeling of danger, and the animating burst of enthusiasm," says Sir Walter Scott, "act on the feelings of many men at once, their minds hold a natural correspondence with each other, as it is said is the case with stringed instruments tuned to the same pitch, of which when one is played, the chords of the others are supposed to vibrate in unison with the tones produced."

The little mound had scarce been raised, and the turf planted upon the stranger's grave, before it was unluckily suggested by somebody, that the body might possibly have been that of William Morgan! The name was no sooner pronounced, than the report spread, with electrical rapidity, that the body of Morgan had actually been washed on shore at Oak Orchard Creek, and that he was hastily buried by those who had known him when living. Nothing could have been better calculated to awaken the sensibilities of the people, and rekindle the embers of the excitement, which, though they had never been quenched, were burning with less intensity than when the fires burst forth in their primitive wrath, than such a report. The utter improbability, or, rather, the physical impossibility, that the body of a drowned man could have been so far preserved in the waters of Ontario, regardless alike of the hunger of the fishes, the action of the waves, and the heat of a summer's sun, for the long period of thirteen months, as to be identified, seems never once to have occurred to the people on this occasion. Or, if such a doubt was suggested, the prompt reply was—"Murder will out!" and it was fiercely contended that heaven itself had directly interposed a miracle, that the murderers might no longer escape the vengeance of the offended laws. The whole country, therefore, rang with the exclamation—"Morgan is found." Even here, in New York, I was startled from my sleep, early in the morning,



immediately on the arrival of one of the Albany steam-boats, by a herald from the county of Monroe, who could not repair to his hotel until he had announced to me the brief message—"Morgan's body has been found!"

No sooner had the reports of the discovery spread to Rochester and Batavia, than the members of the respective committees of investigation hastened to the county of Orleans, where the body had been driven ashore, and on Saturday, the 13th of October, they repaired to the grave, and caused it to be disinterred and examined. A variety of striking resemblances were at once discovered between the body, putrid, and black, and swollen as it was, and their recollections of William Morgan. Indeed so strongly were these gentlemen impressed with the belief that it was none other than the remains of the absentee, that they took measures for holding another inquest, and caused the body to be carefully guarded, lest it should be stolen away by the Masons, until they could make arrangements for that purpose. Mrs. Morgan was sent for, together with various witnesses from Rochester and Batavia, who had known Morgan most intimately in his life-time; and on Monday, the 15th, a second inquest was held, in the midst of a large collection of people, who had spontaneously assembled; for every bosom now glowed anew with the excitement. Even the conspirators themselves began to fear for the result, and sent their counsel—and they had a large portion of the bar constantly in pay—to see that no unfair means were adopted to create an impression that the body was that of Morgan, without good and sufficient proof. The trial for poor Mrs. Morgan was painful beyond description. Not only to have all her wounds thus torn open afresh, but to be compelled to examine the remains of one whom she came prepared to believe had actually been the husband of her bosom, in their present loathsome condition—awakening, as it must, every painful sensation she had already suffered—must

have been a task almost beyond the endurance of woman. The examinations were protracted and minute, and several witnesses were sworn, who had known Morgan intimately. Among them were two physicians, of whom, a few years previously, he had been a patient, at Rochester. And the resemblances between the living and the dead, were most striking and remarkable. Mrs. Morgan had not a particle of doubt of the identity of the body—fully believing it to be that of her husband. It was bald, and had a grey beard, with long white hairs in the ears. It had much hair upon the breast ; the left arm had the mark of inoculation upon it ; the teeth were double all round : and in all these respects, the resemblances were said to be exact. Two of Morgan's teeth had been extracted : the dentist who had extracted them was now present, having the teeth with him ;—the body before them had also had two teeth extracted on the same side of the face, and the teeth held by the dentist, fitted them as exactly as though they had been drawn from thence ; while the hair, hands, feet, nails, fingers, and toes, in Mrs. Morgan's opinion, were exactly like those of her husband. A surgical operation had been performed upon the large toe of the left foot, which gave it a peculiar conformation ; and precisely so was it with the body under examination. In short, it appeared, most conclusively, and beyond a doubt, from the testimony of many witnesses, physicians and others, that the body was that of William Morgan, and none other. Only one difficulty remained, and that was a mere trifle : there was not a single article of the clothes found upon the deceased,—no portion of his dress whatever—that had belonged to Mr. Morgan. Mrs. Morgan, and various others, testified to his apparel, minutely, and no doubt truly ; and neither shoes, stockings, shirt, cravat, vest, coat nor pantaloons, corresponded with those of Morgan, either in form, texture, or material. And a number of religious tracts were found in the pockets of the

deceased, not of American, but of English typography—issued from the British Tract Society. These discrepancies, however, were not of the least possible consequence. The body was indisputably that of Morgan. Of this fact the testimony was decisive. And as for the clothes, why the Masons were not fools ; and when they killed Morgan, and cast him into the angry torrent of the Niagara, they took care to change his garments, and furnish the corpse with some religious tracts as passports to the other world. So thought, and so reasoned, the multitude ; and so decided the second coroner's inquest. The body was thereupon officially declared, by the inquest, to be that of the long lost and now found WILLIAM MORGAN.

The next step was the funeral. The body was removed with great parade to Batavia ; a prodigious sensation being of course created through the country traversed by the melancholy procession. It is scarcely in my power to give an adequate and just account of the popular feeling at this particular crisis. Though I should color ever so highly, the picture would yet fall short of the reality. The welkin rang with the direst imprecations, not only upon the actual murderers of Morgan, but upon the whole body of Freemasons, far and near, not a man of whom but was believed to have been acquainted with the murder, and consenting thereunto. The contest of the election was thickening, and the funeral show was not hastened too rapidly. Meantime the tidings spread, and hundreds and thousands of people once more poured in upon the village of Batavia, to join in the funeral obsequies of the great Masonic Martyr. A funeral discourse was preached, and at the close of the solemn services, the body was once more committed to its kindred earth, amidst the tears of the widow, and the curses of the people, deep and bitter, against the Masons. Then what showers of handbills, and addresses, and appeals to the passions of the people, were sent forth, in clouds, upon

the wings of every breeze. "The majesty of the people!" "The triumph of justice over oppression;" "Morgan's ghost walks unavenged among us;" "Murder will out;" "Masons have had their day;" "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" "The voice of thy brother's blood cries to me from the ground!" These, and such-like expressions, were now the watch-words and rallying signals of a political party; and the still small voice of reason and reflection was drowned amid the universal din.

But the body that had been so recently, and with so much pomp and circumstance of woe, reinterred, was not yet suffered to lie quiet in its repose. The Masons, during the whole progress of the investigations respecting the body, and the subsequent enactment of the funereal scene, had scouted the idea of its being that of Morgan; and many even denounced the mournful parade, as an unreal mockery of woe, for political effect. With some of the participants in the proceedings, there might have been justice in the imputation. But it was not so in respect to the multitude. With them, there was no affectation in the matter. They believed what they heard, and were inspired with feelings of holy indignation at what they believed. Be that as it may, however, an advertisement which appeared in one of the Canada papers, near the frontier, happened to attract the attention of some of the persons interested in proving that the disputed body was not that of Morgan, and it was the means of an eclairsissement, of an astounding character to all those engaged in the scenes I have just been describing. From this advertisement it appeared, that in the month of September, then last past—that is to say, some five or six weeks before the last interment, a man by the name of Timothy Monroe, of the town of Clarke, in New Castle District, Upper Canada, having gone in a boat to Newark, was drowned in the Niagara river, while on his return. A de-

scription of his person, his clothes, his cravat, and the tracts, at once pointed to the body found at the mouth of Oak Orchard Creek, as that of this same Timothy Monroe; and a reward of one hundred dollars was offered for its discovery. The widow of Monroe, and her son, were soon apprised of the transactions detailed above. She therefore came directly on, accompanied by the young man, and a friend who was acquainted with her deceased husband. It was charged upon the Morgan conspirators, that she had been informed by them of the circumstances respecting the body, and that the expenses of her journey were also paid by them. But whether this charge be true or not is of no consequence, since these circumstances could neither alter the truth, now about to be developed, nor make one hair of the deceased white or black. Mrs. Monroe came over to the county of Orleans, and was first examined by three members of the Lewiston committee, as to the clothes that had been found upon the body of the deceased; and here, again, there could be no mistake. The clothes, every article of them, were those of her husband,—those which he had on when upset from his boat in the Niagara, and the tracts had been seen in his possession at Newark, on the day he was lost. In regard to his apparel, there were a variety of circumstances and marks, and peculiarities touching the various garments, about which there could be no diversity of opinion. The color; the description of cloth; the flannel shirt, which Morgan had not; the fashion of the garments, and even the particular darnings of the stockings, were all minutely described, and marks referred to which had not been detected by the committee, that made the matter certain. Respecting the pantaloons, the son had purchased the cloth; and his mother had cut and made them. The pattern being scant, a part of one of the legs had been eked out with another piece of cloth, &c. Mrs. M. then proceeded to Batavia, where the corrupting spectacle of mortality was

once more torn from the embrace of its parent earth, and a third coroner's inquest held upon it. Another close examination succeeded, in which many of the former resemblances between this body and Morgan, were not now discoverable; and among others, on a re-examination, it was found that the teeth had not the peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of being double all round in front, as was the case with Morgan, and five had been extracted from this body, whereas Morgan had lost but two. In short, without descending into further particulars, it now appeared beyond doubt or cavil, that the body was that of **TIMOTHY MONROE**, late of Upper Canada.

This result was received with high satisfaction by the western Masons, generally. Those who had been engaged in the conspiracy, had their own reasons for rejoicing at the discovery of the truth of *this* matter, proving that it was not the body of Morgan; while the still greater number of the order, who were yet hoping against hope, that the outrage was not so great as had been charged, and that Morgan might yet be brought to light and life—but who, in any event, were determined not to give up Masonry on compulsion—had yet room to hope on still. But the discovery of the mistake, to call it by no harsher name, came too late to create a re-action in a political sense. The last coroner's inquest sat on the 29th of October. The election commenced on the following Monday. And under the watchwords which I have already indicated, the new party achieved a victory in several of the agitated counties, of the most decisive description. Serious inroads were made in others; and from that day to the present, I have seen no diminution of their numbers, nor marked any abatement of their energy.

As it is my purpose to embody facts rather than to indulge in speculations, in these desultory essays, I shall not stop to remark at length upon the extraordinary incidents of

the preceding narrative. I question not the integrity of the majority of the actors in these scenes; and the witnesses who so completely established the fact that the body of Timothy Monroe was actually that of William Morgan, are not in the least obnoxious to censure on the score of veracity. But the case presents one of the strongest instances within my recollection, of the effects of a popular delusion upon the human mind—and it may perhaps afford a suitable subject of philosophical investigation for some future Dugald Stuart.

Although it came too late for political effect, yet there was somewhat of a re-action, after the exposition of the case of Monroe's body. A large public meeting was held at Rochester, and several addresses were delivered—some of them, however, by the counsellors of the conspirators; but this fact was lost sight of for the moment, in the indignation felt at the imposture. A series of resolutions was likewise adopted, well written, temperate, and dignified. In these it was declared, as the opinion of the meeting, that the committees of investigation had exceeded their instructions, and perverted the sacred cause in which they had engaged, to political and proscriptive purposes. It was declared that the efforts of those committees ought to have been merely auxiliary to the ministers of justice, and that in the exercise of the powers confided to them, they ought to have confined themselves exclusively to such acts as were necessary and proper to bring the perpetrators of the outrage to legal trial and punishment. They were charged with having proscribed a large and respectable portion of the people without proof, censuring individuals upon mere suspicion, and with attempting to organize political parties for the promotion of selfish and ambitious purposes; with breaking up families, and exciting neighbors against neighbors. The meeting pledged itself to use all possible exertions to discover the fate of Morgan, and to bring the

perpetrators of the outrage to punishment; and in conclusion, they denounced the Morgan committee as altogether unworthy of the public confidence. In the aspect of the case, as it was then presented, these resolutions appeared very just and proper. But the people, who were somewhat indignant at first, soon returned to their former state of feeling; and in the end it appeared that some of the conspirators themselves, or at least those who had even aided them by money to abscond, were at the bottom of this meeting.

Whilst the proceedings in regard to the body of Monroe were going forward, a circumstance occurred at Buffalo, of rather a singular description, which created considerable interest for some time, and occasioned, but for the moment only, a partial diversion from the fresh impulse given to the excitement at Batavia. A man calling himself R. H. Hill, came voluntarily forward, avowed himself the principal of the murderers of Morgan, and surrendered his person to the civil authorities. He was thrown into prison, where he wrote a confession of his participation in the bloody transaction. He declared that he had been induced to make the acknowledgment from the stings of conscience, for having assisted in taking the life of a man whom he had never seen before. He would not disclose the names of any of his associates, inasmuch as they had each bound themselves, by the most solemn and fearful oaths, that, should either of them ever be detected, they were to abide the penalty of the law, without betraying the names of either. He declared himself ready and willing, nay, anxious, to undergo that penalty, and seemed pious and penitent. As the crime was supposed to have been committed in the county of Niagara, Hill was transferred to the jail in Lockport, where he was kept until the empannelling of the first grand jury. He then went before that body and repeated his confessions. But his tale, unsupported by any other evidence, and uncorroborated by circumstances, was discredited, and



he was ultimately discharged as one having a mind diseased. Since his liberation, I have never heard a syllable of or from him.

The year 1827, however, was not to pass away without one further illustration of human weakness and credulity. Almost from the origin of the Anti-masonic excitement, the country had been infested with mountebank Anti-masonic professors of Masonry, travelling about from village to village, giving lectures upon the subject, and professing to present the public with practical representations of the process of working in lodges, and conferring the various degrees of Masonry. These exhibitions have, for the most part, been made for lucre, after the example of strolling professors of slight-of-hand dexterity, the feats of fire-eaters, sword-swallowers, &c. Among the earliest of these travelling merchants of vendible nonsense, was a man named Thomas Hamilton. His character will appear presently. Although a very ignorant man, he was, in truth and in fact, one of the boldest, most impudent, and, for a time, most successful of impostors. He had the art, for several weeks, of imposing himself upon a portion of the religious community, and succeeded tolerably well. Having, however, been a Freemason, and seeing how well the illustrations of Masonry by Morgan, had taken with the western public, he resolved to turn the same thing to his own private account. He accordingly commenced delivering lectures against the craft, and preaching Anti-masonry. Crowds of people thronged his exhibitions; and many were the towns he visited where the excitement had not yet broken out, but which he speedily wrought up almost into a state of delirium upon the subject. Not content, however, with this harvest of popularity, he must needs play the hero, and become all but a second martyr to the cause he had espoused. He was an intemperate man, and having, on one occasion, while engaged in the work of imparting intellectual light to the good people

of Avon, imposed too heavy a quantity of alcohol upon his stomach, became sick, and a portion of what he had swallowed was ejected. The landlord was a Mason ; of which fact he availed himself, in connexion with the circumstance of the undesigned emetic he had taken, to prefer a charge against his host, of an attempted assassination of his precious self. A full account of the suspicious circumstances was written, certified to by five respectable citizens of Avon, and published in the newspapers under his own hand. The poor landlord was astounded ; but there was no resisting the popular prejudice against his caste, and he was obliged to submit to the imputation. He did not submit quietly, however, but instituted an action of slander against one person who had helped to circulate the atrocious calumny.\* Hamilton, meantime, fled from that part of the country, and proceeding westward to Buffalo, succeeded in producing a great excitement there. His lectures were crowded, as they had been in other places, and he occasionally embellished his exercises with recitals of his own personal persecutions from the Masons, and their blood-thirsty attempts upon his life. Finally, the day after he had uttered one of his bitterest philippics against the craft, he was missing. No traces of him could be discovered ; and many were the dark surmises respecting his fate that were breathed forth in mysterious whispers. On the following day, nothing could be heard of Mr. Hamilton. But on the next, there was a discovery. News was received that a man had been found drowned in the Tonawanta Creek, but a few miles from Buffalo, and the conviction flashed at once upon the minds of the good people, that it must be the corpse of the ill-fated Hamilton. His life had once before been attempted ; and now, alas ! he had doubtless been called to pay the penalty of his masonic obligation. The

\* The landlord recovered a handsome verdict of damages, the jury, by consent, being composed entirely of Anti-masons.

body had been interred ; but no matter : a party immediately proceeded from Buffalo, with witnesses, and all the necessary implements for opening the grave. They arrived at the spot, and the body was speedily raised once more above the earth. Happily, however, there was no excuse for pronouncing it to be that of Hamilton ; and the company returned ; somewhat disappointed, it is true, in the present result, but still believing that the man for whom they were seeking had been mysteriously made away with. But on reaching the village, their anxieties were speedily removed by the martyr himself. He had just crawled forth from a tippling stew, in the outskirts of the village, where he had been lying for several days in a state of beastly intoxication. It was time now for the fellow to change his theatre of action. He accordingly fled eastwardly to the county of Ontario,—pursued his lecturing for a short period,—was taken into the domicil, and the confidence, of a kind-hearted Anti-mason—abused his hospitality,—and, in the end, attempted an outrage upon his daughter, a girl of tender age, for which he was sentenced to the state-prison for seven years.

You may suppose, sir, that this last is an exaggerated representation of the extent to which the credulity of the people was abused during the great excitement. But it is not so. The case of Hamilton affords but one instance, although perhaps the most flagrant. I have recorded it, however, in the words of truth and soberness.

On or about the 1st of November, 1827, Gov. Clinton received a communication from Gov. Cass, of Michigan, inclosing an affidavit of an extraordinary character. It was the deposition of Erastus Ingersoll, corroborated by the statement of Amos Mead, both of whom Gov. Cass certifies to be "citizens of character and standing, incapable of "stating any thing but what they believe to be true," giving the substance of a confession made to them in August, of

that year, of a man named Edward Hopkins. This man was at the time a resident of the county of St. Clair, in that territory, lately from Upper Canada, and a native of Berkshire, in the state of Massachusetts. Hopkins declared that "he knew the circumstances connected with the death of Morgan; that he, with others, had Morgan in charge several days, at Niagara, and was present at, or below, a place called Schlosser, on the Niagara river, where a number of persons were assembled with Morgan, and held a consultation on the manner in which he should be disposed of, and that it was finally determined to send him adrift in a canoe down the falls. He was accordingly put into the canoe, and pushed into the rapids of the Niagara, where he perished. Hopkins further stated that he made great efforts to save the life of Morgan, and offered to become responsible for him, if his companions would deliver him over to his care,—but they refused to do so. By whose hands the canoe was pushed off, Hopkins could not tell, because he turned his back upon the perpetrators of the deed." Mr. Ingersoll further deposed, that Hopkins was of a good family, of a respectable character, and a man of truth and veracity. It proved in the end, that this story could not have been true; and I have introduced it in this place, only as affording another instance of the distracting uncertainty which at all times hung over this fearful subject, and the difficulties by which the prosecutions were at every step environed. Very respectfully, &c.

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 LETTER XXIX.

NEW-YORK, March 3, 1832.

SIR,

In the person of DE WITT CLINTON, the state of New-York lost one of its brightest ornaments, and our country

a benefactor of noble mould. He died at Albany, on the evening of February 11th, 1828, very suddenly,—having discharged his official duties on that day, and written several letters in the course of the afternoon. He was sitting in his office, or private cabinet, at the time of his decease, and had but a few moments previously been engaged in familiar conversation with his son. But, sudden as was the stroke of death, it was not unexpected, either by the illustrious man himself, or by his particular friends. It had been evident for a number of months, that a disease had seized upon his constitution, which, without impairing his faculties, threatened an early and sudden termination of his proud and brilliant career. Indeed he had been premonished of his situation, but a short time before his decease, by a medical gentleman, standing deservedly high in his confidence, who was his intimate friend in life, and who has testified the sincerity of his friendship, by an eloquent and well earned tribute to his memory since dead.\* When the friendly monition was made to him, with all possible delicacy, and not without emotion, Governor Clinton received the solemn intimation in a manner characteristic of the man. He paused for a moment, as if indulging in deep reflection; then raising his head, with the most perfect firmness and composure, he replied: "I AM NOT AFRAID TO DIE!"

An eulogy upon the character of this distinguished man, whose memory is yet green in the affections of the people, and whose fame will long be cherished as a rich portion of the national inheritance, would be alike unnecessary, and foreign from the purpose of this narrative. Unfortunately, however, in the present era of our political history, the gall and wormwood of party, have been infused not only into public, but into individual feeling. Neither exalted talents, nor purity of character in a public man,—nor his extensive

\* Dr. David Hosack.

and indefatigable beneficence, and splendid services,—can protect him from the scorpion sting of slander, while living, if a noisy partizan thinks he can further his sordid views by the calumny. And even when he is dead,—when the posthumous reward of greatness is bestowed, in the general exhibition of those better feelings, which had been controlled before by rivalry or self-interest, some hypocritical tears will be shed over his remains, and sacrilegious defamation will not only dare to attempt by violence an exposure of the secrets of the grave; but to deface his epitaph, and to stain his spotless escutcheon. So it was with **DE WITT CLINTON**. The Anti-masonic party, as we have seen, had already been organized for political purposes; and it had made a first and second demonstration with so much encouragement of ultimate success, that those who had mounted upon the whirlwind of the excitement, were determined to protract it, that they might the longer soar upon the tempest. This object could be accomplished in no other way, so effectually, as by continuing to insist upon the positive guilt of the whole masonic institution, in the matter of Morgan, through all its extensive and distant ramifications, and likewise to implicate its chief officers, and most distinguished men. **De Witt Clinton** was High Priest of the General Grand Chapter of the United States, at the time of his death. He was for the third time re-elected to that office in September, 1826, Gen. Jackson having been proposed as a candidate in opposition. His station, masonically, was the highest in the Union; and whether viewed as a Freemason, or as a statesman, he was the most shining and elevated mark to be aimed at. If effective, the blow would indeed be signal; because, if **De Witt Clinton** could be identified with the project for the murder of Morgan,—if the spells of Masonry could bind such a man to so damning a deed, how much less potency would be necessary to bring the common men of the order into plans of the deepest guilt?

It is but too true, as we have already seen, that the name of Governor Clinton had been early used at the west, in connexion with the Morgan outrage. Nor were the Anti-masons the first, or the most to blame, for thus using it. If, sir, you have done me the honor to read the preceding letters in detail, you will have seen that the idea was generally impressed upon the minds of those in the secret of Morgan's fate, on both sides of the national boundary, that the conspirators were acting under orders from a high masonic power. Sometimes the directions for suppressing the book, were said to have proceeded from the Grand Lodge; and at others, the belief was entertained that they came from a yet higher body—the Grand Chapter. To neither of these, however, did De Witt Clinton then belong, but to the still higher body of the General Grand Chapter of the United States;—and we shall see presently how even that body, though innocent, was near being compromised in this lamentable affair. In connexion with all these bodies, the name of Clinton was used, because it was identified with the institution; and in general conversation there was little discrimination between its separate branches. But it was not in this incidental manner alone, that the name of Governor Clinton became associated with these transactions. There is no doubt, *that the authors of the conspiracy and the abduction, were themselves guilty of the additional crime of an attempt, in the public opinion, to inculcate him in their own guilt.* Indeed, it is believed, *that the leaders of the conspiracy were enabled by the power of his name alone, to push the subordinates in their plot, into its full and fatal execution.* For this purpose it was not only declared that they had orders from Gov. Clinton to suppress the publication of the book, but some of the co-workers in the iniquitous affair, actually exhibited a LETTER, purporting to have been written by the Governor, **COMMANDING THE SUPPRESSION OF THE BOOK AT ALL HAZARDS.** Major Ganson is believed to have

been concerned in this imposture, although he has certified to the contrary, as will presently appear. He had repeatedly been in the legislature, and was a political friend of Gov. C. There is, therefore, reason to believe, that such representations, coming from him, sustained by the exhibition in some places, of a letter, which must have been forged, had a powerful influence upon the minds of the weaker members of the order ; and it is possible, that, could a voice come from the grave, it would appear that there was one, who, by that deception, was persuaded to take the deepest plunge into the sea of guilt. Be that, nevertheless, as it may, a fouler calumny was never invented, even by the father of lies himself.

It is true that Gov. Clinton was early reproached by the Anti-masonic papers, for an imputed want of activity and energy in pushing forward the investigations. But these reproaches, and other kindred calumnies, were to be expected from zealous and unscrupulous partizans, in the midst of heated election contests. We should be too happy in our political relations, perhaps, if the blessings of our free institutions were in all respects unalloyed. The strife and bitterness of our elections, therefore, and the slanders and obloquy which candidates for public office, are compelled to encounter, may be regarded as the natural consequences of the liberty which allows them. Nor, in the aggregate, can their endurance be counted a very heavy tax, for the enjoyment of such perfect freedom, as that which is guaranteed to American citizens. Long in political life, and always fated to encounter a fierce, and, at times, a remorseless and vindictive opposition, Gov. Clinton cared for these political attacks far less than most men. Conscious, therefore, of his own rectitude in this matter, the murmurings to which I am now referring were suffered to pass by without notice or regard. But when, in the autumn of 1827, he was specifically informed of the higher calumnies in circulation re-



specting him, at the west, and of the liberty taken with his name by the conspirators, he lost no time, as you will perceive before the close of the present communication, in adopting such measures as seemed most judicious for arresting the progress of the atrocious slander.

It was, I believe, during the last visit of that eminent man to the city of New-York, that, unsolicited, he placed in my hands, with a request that they might be carefully perused, a bundle of papers, comprising a large portion of his correspondence, and other public documents, upon this subject. Of these papers, which have been politely re-loaned to me by his son CHARLES CLINTON, Esq., I have already made considerable use, in the course of the preceding narrative. And upon these papers alone, so far as I have already quoted them, I think I might confidently appeal to you, sir, and to the whole community, whether they do not amply redeem the character of Governor Clinton from all insinuations, imputing a want of energy, promptitude, and diligence, in the use of all measures judged by him to be necessary and proper, in order to expose to light the whole of those dark transactions, and bring the offenders, whoever they were, or however many of them there might be, to the tribunals of the law for punishment.

The earliest complaint which I recollect to have heard from the Morgan committees, against the conduct of Gov. Clinton, was in reference to his first and second proclamations. In the first, no specific reward was offered for the apprehension and punishment of the delinquents;—in the second, it was contended that the reward promised was not sufficiently large;—and I think the same objection was likewise urged against the last—with how much reason will be seen. In regard to the first, it must be borne in mind that the outrage was then supposed to have been confined to a very few persons at Batavia and Canandaigua. Little was known at the time of the extent of the conspiracy; or

of its enormity ; and still less of the difficulty subsequently encountered in the numerous and wearisome endeavors that have been made to discover and punish the guilty. When the first complaint was made to the Governor, he lost not a day in issuing his proclamation. His letter to the committee, accompanying that proclamation, has already been presented to your consideration, and need not be repeated here. In that letter he pledged himself, "*that no-thing should be wanting on his part due to the occasion and the emergency.*" And I fearlessly appeal to the candor of any man of good sense, to pronounce, whether, under the then circumstances of the case, that first proclamation was not of a sufficiently decisive and energetic character for that "emergency ;" and also, whether the explanation with which the proclamation was accompanied, ought not to have been satisfactory. Was it reasonable to expect from the chief magistrate, acting coolly and dispassionately, as it was his province and his duty to act, a more marked and severe condemnation of the outrage, than is expressed in the letter referred to ? Subsequently, when the transaction began to assume a more serious aspect, a second proclamation was issued, without solicitation, offering various specific rewards. Some months subsequently still, after the disclosures respecting Howard, and the partial discoveries made by the Lewiston convention had reached the Governor's ears, a third proclamation was issued, offering as high a reward as the law would allow him to propose, even to the full amount of the contingent funds in his hands. Nor is this all : when the Governor became apprised that Bruce was implicated in the transaction, he himself proposed that a formal complaint should be preferred against the delinquent officer, that his conduct might be officially investigated. The complaint was made ; and, although a grand jury of Niagara, had, in a body, informed the Governor that there was no evidence of Morgan's having been within

Bruce's jurisdiction, yet he was removed from office in due season, as I have already shown. In my view, sir, leaving entirely out of the question the exalted character of Gov. C., and the elevated standard of morals by which he was governed, these circumstances look very unlike any participation in, or cognizance of, the conspiracy, directly or indirectly, either by signal, word, or deed. If Gov. Clinton had, in any form or manner, been previously apprised of the conspiracy, or had he in any manner favored it, it can hardly be supposed that those who had executed his purposes, would have tamely submitted to the loss of character, honor, offices, and their personal freedom, without exposing him. If they held his written letters, they would have been exhibited. If any person had received his approbation of the plot, or his commands for its execution, *viva voce*, the fact would have been proclaimed, and the name of Clinton, "doubly dying," would justly have gone down

To the vile dust from whence it sprung,  
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

And yet, in the face of all these facts, in disregard of all these circumstances, the remains of this eminent patriot had scarce become cold in their grave, before the vile calumny, which, during his lifetime had already been apparently extinguished, was revived in the broadest and most cruel manner. The death of Clinton had thrown our state into mourning, and created a sensation throughout the whole country, equalled only, in recent times, by the simultaneous departures to another world, on the 4th of July, 1826, of your illustrious father, and his distinguished colleague in the revolution. But the funeral ceremonies had scarce been concluded, and the first shock of the blow given place to the more tempered, though equally unequivocal evidences of deep and heartfelt grief, before the interested and envious harpies of de-

traction were at work. Wretches who would have cowered in his presence, like the spaniel before the lion, or shrunk like the fig-tree withered before the lightning-glance of his eye, were now engaged in poisoning the public ear, like the arch fiend in reptile form, "squat" at the ear of the mother of men. Not content with the repetition of the stale falsehoods in whispers, a portion of the public press was found base enough to lend its assistance in the ignoble project of "staining with infamy a spotless name." Assuming daily a bolder and yet a bolder tone, one short month had not elapsed, before it was blasphemously heralded forth, that the deceased had been struck dead by the avenging arm of the Almighty, for his guilty participation in the murder of Morgan,—to which, as the climax of audacity, it was soon added, that, stung with remorse at the deed which he had sanctioned, he had ended his life by his own hand! It might well be supposed that such gross and monstrous fictions would have been too much for the popular credulity, and that the most envenomed shafts of calumny, directed at such an object, would fall harmless to the earth. But "excited passion is a whirlwind that extinguishes the taper of reason,—a rushing flood that renders turbid the pure stream of the judgement, so that truth cannot be clearly discerned." And I am sorry to be obliged to add my conviction, that, so far from making no impression, or leaving even a transient one, the calumny is still at the present day widely circulated, and by many religiously believed. You, sir, have yourself informed me, although you lent no ear to the tale, that within a few months past, two gentlemen in Massachusetts, of intelligence and respectability, had repeated the story of Gov. Clinton's guilt in this matter, both of whom seriously affirmed the existence of two letters from his own hand, proving the fact. And I have now before me a printed address, under the signature of N. B. Boileau, Esq., an old and distinguished politician of Penn-

sylvania, in which the tale is repeated, without scruple or qualification, and with an improvement which has in no other place fallen under my observation. The charge of Mr. Boileau, that Gov. Clinton was an accessory before the fact, to the abduction and murder of Morgan, is explicit. Nor is Gov. Clinton alone traduced by that gentleman. Not content with this atrocious libel of the dead, the zealous calumniator endeavors also to inculcate the governors of two other states in the same transaction !

Had it not been for the publication of Mr. Boileau, to which I refer, and the statement of the two gentlemen of Massachusetts made to yourself last autumn, I should probably have omitted the present chapter in this history. But De Witt Clinton is dead, and cannot answer. His fame, however, belongs to his country, and it is a high and solemn duty incumbent upon those who were his cotemporaries, to preserve that fame in its splendor, and his good name in its purity. However great a politician may be, his memory, merely as such, will scarcely survive his death for a single generation, unless he shall have identified his name with some great deed in arms, or work of art; by some successful effort in the moral improvement of our species, or some project of national magnitude and utility, which will stand as an enduring monument of the talents and enterprise of the age in which it was produced. It is in this way that the name of Clinton belongs to posterity. His popularity will be immortal, because the influence of his talents, and the effects of his labors, will endure while our nation has an existence. It is from considerations like these, having the means in my possession, that I have thought it a part of my duty, on the present occasion, to step forward, and by at once silencing the calumny, put to shame the traducers of this eminent and excellent man.

Mr. Boileau, in his address to the people of Pennsylvania last autumn, promulgated the calumny of which I have

been speaking, in the following language :—" A seceding  
 " Mason from New-York, of high character and intelli-  
 " gence, informed me that when it was first rumored that  
 " Morgan was about to reveal the secrets of Masonry, a  
 " council was held in New-York, by the highest order of  
 " Masons, to consult on what means should be adopted to  
 " suppress the publication ; at which council, *the Governor*  
 " *of New-York, and the Governors of two other states as-*  
 " *sisted in the deliberations*, and at that council decided that  
 " *the publication should be suppressed at all hazards, AND*  
 " **MORGAN PUT OUT OF THE WAY.** These facts are corro-  
 " borated by the strongest circumstances, *furnished by the*  
 " *judicial proceedings which have taken place*, as well as  
 " other circumstances. Fellow-citizens, pause for a mo-  
 " ment, and view this appalling fact. Three chief execu-  
 " tive magistrates, of three different states, all sworn to see  
 " the laws faithfully executed. Yet under the *paramount*  
 " obligations of their *masonic oaths*, they deliberately join in  
 " council to sanction the commission of a most atrocious  
 " crime. We say the crime of MURDER is justly charg-  
 " ed to the masonic institution, and all those who still ad-  
 " here to that institution are totally unworthy of confidence.  
 " The actual perpetrators of the crime deserve death," &c.

The charge against Gov. Clinton could scarcely be more positive than in the form in which it is here presented. The author of the calumny, in its present shape, and all his readers, well knew that De Witt Clinton was Governor of New-York, at the period referred to. Nor can Mr. Boileau escape the odium of the slander, upon the plea that he has only repeated a story which had been communicated to him by others. Repetition is not all. He goes farther, and indorses the statement himself, by the declaration that the relation thus given, has been "*corroborated by the judicial proceedings that have taken place, as well as by other cir-*  
*cumstances.*" In bringing forward such an accusation, and

attempting thus to sustain it, Mr. Boileau has assumed a fearful responsibility. The repetition of a falsehood told by another, is bad enough ; but language wants terms to stamp with adequate detestation, the man, who, to calumniate the virtuous dead, will deliberately coin a falsehood of his own, to sustain that which has been related to him. Had Mr. Boileau confined himself to the repetition of the falsehood, I might have suffered it to pass unchastised. But how dared he assert, in the face of the world, that the slander which he was then posting on the winds of heaven, had been corroborated by the legal proceedings of the courts of New-York in the premises ? He had no right to hazard such an assertion, even though *that*, also, had been told him—which he does not pretend was the case. The legal proceedings of our courts are matters of record ; and the testimony elicited in the various Morgan trials, has been amply reported, and has become matter of history. It would have become Mr. B., therefore, before venturing upon such a sweeping assertion, involving character to such an extent, so important alike to the feelings of the living, and the memory of the dead, to have looked into the facts of the charge himself. Had he done so, he would have found, that there is not a particle of truth, written or unwritten, in the statement upon which, with such singular hardihood of assertion, he has presumed to venture.

I will not content myself, however, with a mere empty denial of this accusation, resting on my own word. Its principal feature is not new with Mr. Boileau, as we have seen, although it has been greatly amplified in his hands. The idea of this grand council in New-York, had its origin at an early period in the history of Anti-masonry ; and it would have been no easy matter for Proteus himself to have worked more transformations, than the story built upon it has undergone. Strange as it may seem, moreover, while every version that I have met with has been essentially

false, there was, in the outset, an incident of actual occurrence, which originally imparted to it a semblance of truth; so that, like other historical romances of the day, composed entirely of fiction, it was nevertheless in its origin, apparently founded in fact. It has long been my purpose to enlighten the public in regard to the particular feature of this history to which I have just referred; and I rejoice in the present opportunity, inasmuch as I confidently believe it to be within my power for ever to put the calumny at rest.

You may recollect, sir, the statement in a former letter, that among the devices for obtaining possession of Morgan's manuscripts, a portion of them were abstracted from Miller's office, by his pretended partner, Johns, which papers were sent to New-York, by an express, to be laid before the General Grand Chapter of the United States, assembled in this city in September, 1826. Johns took these papers, I believe, on the 9th of September; and the messenger who brought them, resided at that time in Rochester, although he was then, and is yet, connected with a press in a more important location. The General Grand Chapter commenced its sittings on the 14th of September.

The messenger arrived, and presented the papers with the delivery of which he had been charged, on the second day of the session, viz: on the 15th. The gentleman appeared greatly agitated, and seemed to think himself charged with a mission of high importance. Governor Clinton presided during that session, but was not present in the chapter when this message arrived—Mr. Snow, of Ohio, being in the chair of the G. G. High Priest for the time being. The papers were presented, and referred to a select committee, of which my friend Col. Knapp, then of Boston, was chairman. This committee retired immediately, and after some conversation with the messenger, became satisfied, that in a moment of excitement at the west, of which, however, they had received no previous intimation,



the papers had been improperly obtained. The committee, therefore, without opening the papers, determined to report immediately against receiving them, in order that they might be sent back without delay, and delivered to the owner. On returning into the chapter, they reported that the papers which had been committed to them, appeared to be private property,—papers with which the General Grand Chapter had nothing to do,—and they recommended that the messenger be instructed to return, forthwith, and deliver them back to the owner. The report was concurred in by the chapter, without a dissenting voice. Governor Clinton came into the chapter afterwards, during the same sitting, and having heard some intimation of what had taken place, made the inquiries naturally arising from such an occurrence. The facts were explained to him, and he declared emphatically his hearty approbation of the course that had been adopted.\*

Such, sir, in the briefest possible terms, is the history of the real occurrence, which designing men have sought to use ever since, as proof that the General Grand Chapter, with Governor Clinton at its head, was accessory before the fact, to the murder of Morgan. The circumstance that

\* Since this letter was written, I have received a pamphlet of nearly 200 pages, containing the report of a committee of the Legislature of Rhode Island, appointed to investigate the charges against Freemasonry. Among the witnesses examined, was Moses Richardson, who, in the course of a long and very strange deposition, makes the following statement:—"I was a member of the General Grand Chapter, which was in session in the city of New-York in September, 1826, when the news was received, that William Morgan had been abducted; and the lamented De Witt Clinton, who presided at the meeting, immediately issued his proclamation, and offered fifteen hundred dollars reward for the apprehension of the culprits, and it was published in the newspaper the next day, which was thought sufficient." Mr. Richardson has here fallen into a number of very serious mistakes, as will presently be seen by other testimony than my own. 1st. The news of Morgan's abduction was not then received. 2d. Gov. Clinton was not officially advised of the abduction until the 6th of October—three weeks afterwards. His proclamation was issued on the 7th of October, and was first published about the 17th, at the west. Of course, it did not appear "in the newspaper the next morning." It did not offer 1500 dollars, nor any other specific reward. The rewards were offered in subsequent proclamations.

a portion of the manuscripts were thus sent to New-York, was known immediately afterwards, and it was that fact, and that alone, from which the implication of Gov. Clinton, and the distinguished masonic gentlemen then assembled in New-York, from different parts of the United States, in the guilty transaction, has been inferred. A surmise was sufficient, in the first instance, to set a rumor afloat. The broad assertion of the fact soon followed. And it was thus that a transaction, not only innocent in itself, but in the highest degree honorable to the General Grand Chapter, to the committee to whom the papers were referred, and to Governor Clinton himself, has been misrepresented and distorted, until it has at length swollen into the atrocious accusations which we have seen. But the misrepresentation did not end with the story that the General Grand Chapter had examined the papers, and directed "their suppression at all hazards." In order to add to the plausibility, nay, to the possibility of its truth, it became necessary to falsify dates, and change the actual time of the meeting of the General Grand Chapter. Morgan, it will be recollected, was taken from Batavia, on the morning of September 11th. He was thrown into prison in Canandaigua, on the night of that day. And on the night of the 12th, two days before the meeting of the General Grand Chapter, and three days previously to the arrival of the papers in New-York, he was kidnapped from the jail, and stolen away to the west. It was therefore an utter impossibility, that the General Grand Chapter, or Gov. Clinton, could have been consulted in the matter. This difficulty, however, was soon overcome by the exercise of a little ingenuity, and still less of honesty. Knowing that the great body of the people would not speedily, if ever, be undeceived, the period of the meeting of the General Grand Chapter was altered in the Anti-masonic papers, and carried back into August! This miserable fraud gave the necessary time to impart consistency to the

story, and the purpose was for the time abundantly answered.

I have had occasion, many months ago, to refer to the transaction of which I have now given you some account, and to expose the fraud in the alteration of the date, by the Anti-masonic papers, although the facts were adverted to very briefly. But as that exposition was unheeded by those for whom it was intended, with a single exception,\* I am now prepared to fortify my own, by other testimony, the character of which will not be called in question. With a view to the present essay, about a month since, I addressed the following letter to my friend, Col. Knapp, whose name has already been mentioned:—

*“ New-York, February 5, 1832.*

*“ DEAR SIR,*

*“ You are already acquainted with the fact that I am engaged in the preparation of a work, intended for the public eye, upon the subject of speculative Freemasonry, and the Antimasonic excitement. In the course of the history which it is my intention to give of the origin and progress of Anti-masonry, it will be incumbent upon me to notice, for the purpose of repelling it, an infamous slander which has connected the name of one of the illustrious dead, with the unhappy transactions lying at the foundation of that excitement. From the repeated conversations which we have had together upon this subject, you will readily understand the particular incident to which I would now call your attention—especially as your own name has frequently been connected with it by the more reckless of the Anti-masonic presses. You were, as I well recollect, one of the representatives of the Grand Chapter of Massachusetts, in the General Grand Chapter of the United States, at its last septennial*

*\* T. Weed, Esq., Editor of the Albany Evening Journal.*

convocation, which was held in the autumn of 1826 ; and as you were what is called a working member, and of course intimately acquainted with all its proceedings, I feel no hesitancy in making the request I am about to prefer, entertaining at the same time the fullest confidence in the authenticity, and a due estimate of the value, of the information which I know it is in your power to furnish me in reply. Will you, therefore, be kind enough to favor me with as speedy an answer as your convenience will allow, to the following queries ?

“ 1st. Were you present in the General Grand Chapter, in September, 1826, when a companion arrived from the western part of this state, having in his possession certain papers and manuscripts, to lay which before that body he alledged he had been sent hither as an express ?

“ 2d. On what day, and at about what hour, did this special messenger arrive, and what was the peculiarity, if any, of his manner ?

“ 3d. What course was taken with the said papers, in the first instance ?

“ 4th. What in the second ?

“ 5th. Was the late Most Excellent General Grand High Priest, De Witt Clinton, presiding in the chapter; on that day ?

“ 6th. If aye, what was his conduct on that occasion, and what remarks, if any, did he make from the chair on the subject ?

“ 7th. What was the final disposition of the whole matter, so far as the General Grand Chapter was concerned, officially or otherwise ?

“ By answering the foregoing inquiries, and also by furnishing me any additional information that may be within your knowledge or possession, calculated to assist in the elucidation of this branch of my investigations, you will not only confer a favor upon me, but do what is of much

greater and higher consequence—assist in rescuing the memory of a great and virtuous man, who has descended to an untimely grave “with all his country’s wishes blest,” from one of the most atrocious calumnies ever invented by man.

“I am, sir, very truly yours,

“WILLIAM L. STONE.

“COL. SAMUEL L. KNAPP.”

To the foregoing letter I was promptly favored with the following communication in reply :—

“*New-York, February 8, 1832.*

“DEAR SIR,

“I embrace this, the first opportunity I have had since the receipt of your letter, to give you such answers to your interrogatories as my best recollections afford. I was a member of the General Grand Chapter of the United States, at their septennial convocation, in September, 1826, having taken my seat as a delegate from the Grand Chapter of Massachusetts. On the second day of the session, the second officer of the General Grand Chapter,—companion Snow, from Ohio,—being in the chair, in the fore part of the day, he stated to that body that a special communication had been made to him from the western part of the state of New-York, and suggested the propriety of putting it into the hands of a committee, before the nature of it was known to the chapter at large. This was agreed to, and I had the honor of being appointed chairman of the committee. It being stated that it might be a matter of importance, the committee forthwith retired to consider the communication. I went into the committee room without a hint upon the subject. A young gentleman, whose name I never inquired after, presented the committee some printed pages and a manuscript; stating, at the same time, that several of the

masonic fraternity in his part of the country, had apprehended that some mischief might ensue from the publication of such a work as the printed pages and manuscript purported to be, particularly in the state of feeling which he said prevailed among the Masons in the west. The messenger was in the highest state of excitement. The committee patiently heard his story, and having deliberated thereon, returned the messenger his papers without any examination of them, telling him, distinctly, that it was a subject in which the General Grand Chapter could take no part. The committee having agreed unanimously in this opinion, returned to the lodge room and made a verbal report. This was accepted with but a few, or no remarks, from the companions, at the time, and without a dissenting voice. In a subsequent portion of that day, our General Grand High Priest, De Witt Clinton, took the chair; and while in it, inquired if a communication had been made from the fraternity of the west, and if so, what had been done thereon? I stated to him the course pursued by the committee and chapter, which met with his entire approbation; and he repeated the language which had been used by the committee, that this body had nothing to do with the subject, and that it was not worthy the notice of Masons. The communication made no excitement in the General Grand Chapter; they then thought it one of those idle apprehensions frequently known among young Masons, and there left it. A few hours after the interview which the messenger had with the committee, he came to me and appeared dissatisfied, or, at least, disappointed, at the indifference shown by the General Grand Chapter on the subject of his communication, and at this time let fall some hints that the writer of the manuscript might at that time be in prison for debt. My reply to him was, if he is imprisoned for debt, go and raise money among the fraternity, to pay

the debts he is held for, and discharge them, and see that he has his liberty, and his manuscripts as soon as possible.

“In this, as in all other intercourse I ever had with our Grand High Priest, De Witt Clinton, I have ever found him honorable and high-minded, and in a most remarkable degree possessing the confidence and affection of all the members of the General Grand Chapter, while at the head of the institution, which was a period of nearly twenty years; and how deeply he was lamented at his death, will be seen by looking at the proceedings of the General Grand Chapter, in September, 1829.

“Yours, truly,

“SAMUEL L. KNAPP.

“To Wm. L. Stone, Esq.”

Conclusive, however, nay, triumphant, as I think this vindication might be considered, even were the case to be rested here,—more especially when taken in connexion with the facts and circumstances touching the conduct of Governor Clinton, in relation to the Morgan business, and the portions of his correspondence respecting it, which have been incorporated in several of the preceding letters—yet there is other and stronger testimony in reserve. I have already intimated in the present letter, that Gov. Clinton was in his life-time apprised, to some extent, of the aspersions cast upon his character upon this subject, and that he was not backward in the adoption of measures to rescue his own good name from the obloquy. No further evidence of this fact need be adduced—stronger testimony cannot be—than the following correspondence, which took place between Gov. C. and Jacob Le Roy, Esq., a gentleman of great respectability residing in the county of Genesee, a short time previously to the lamented decease of the former:—

*" Le Roy, October 29, 1827.*

" MY DEAR SIR,

" You have, doubtless, been long acquainted with the great excitement prevailing in this section of the state, in consequence of the abduction of Morgan ; which excitement, I regret to say, is increasing, owing to the designing views of some of the leaders of the Anti-masonic party. Your name in this transaction, is now becoming conspicuous, and some of our most respectable citizens have informed me, that certain Masons have asserted that you have written to them, authorising this act. I have endeavored to trace it to its source, and in every instance, where I have been able to meet with the persons said to have made the assertions, have found them slanders ; the person here, who appears most conspicuous in making these charges, is said to be Dr. F\*\*\*\*. I have charged him with the fact, which he positively denies. A number of our most influential citizens, your friends, knowing my acquaintance with you, have requested me to write, and beg of you to answer the following questions :—

" Did you know that any attempts were to be made to carry off Morgan, previous to his abduction ?

" Did you ever, in conversation with Dr. F\*\*\*\*, or Mr. B\*\*\*\*, of Batavia, or any other Mason, lead them to suppose you were in favor of his abduction ?

" Have you ever written to any Mason, authorising the act ?

" Did you, while on your visit to this county, in the summer of 1826, attend any of their Masonic meetings ?

" Did you, as has been stated by Southwick, tender your hospitality to Col. King, while in Albany, knowing at the time, he had been a participator in these transactions ?

" You, no doubt, may think I am bold and free in thus questioning you, on subjects in which you may think I have



no concern ;—but, my dear sir, it is from the purest motives (being perfectly satisfied in my own mind of the wickedness of these charges,) that your exalted character, should be shielded from such assassin-like attacks. I am persuaded your denial of these assertions will put the authors to that disgrace which they so justly deserve, and put down at once these infamous reports.

“ I have again to beg you will not take offence at this communication, coming, as you well know, from one, who ever has been a strong friend and admirer of your character.

“ With the greatest respect,

“ Believe me, most sincerely,

“ Your friend,

“ JACOB LE ROY.

“ To his excellency,

“ DE WITT CLINTON, *Albany.*”

“ *New-York, November 3, 1827.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I have received your letter of the 29th of October, and have a full impression of the honorable and friendly motives which governed you in writing it ;—I beg you to accept my sincere thanks. I shall now answer it fully, and satisfactorily, and with great pleasure.

“ I have always condemned the abduction of Morgan, and have never spoken of the measure, but as a most unwarrantable outrage, and as deserving the most severe punishment. I had no previous knowledge of any such intention. I never gave it, before or after, the least encouragement, either verbally or in writing, directly or indirectly.

You may recollect that I was in your county, in July, 1826. During that time I attended no masonic meeting,

nor did I ever speak to Dr. F\*\*\*\*, Mr. B\*\*\*\*, or any other person, in a way that would lead them to suppose that I countenanced any outrage on Morgan, or any other person, nor can I recollect to have had any conversation at that time, about Morgan, or his intended publication. I cannot think there can be a human being so base as to make such an insinuation, seriously, and believing it.

“ The only time I saw Col. King, after the Morgan affair, was on his way to Washington ; and then he called on me in Albany, to transact some business for the state, when at the former place, which I declined committing to his agency. I had no satisfactory proof of his being concerned in that outrage. Indeed he introduced the subject himself, disclaiming all participation.

“ I have seen, if I recollect right, in Miller’s Batavia paper, an assertion that in virtue of an official station in Masonry, I might have avoided a discovery of the offenders, or prevented the offence. It is sufficient to say, that this assertion is totally false.

“ I have also seen, in a Le Roy paper, say of the 17th of October, an averment, from an anonymous writer, that he had heard a Mason say, he would not have been concerned in the outrage, if he had not seen a letter from me favorable to the act. Although very reluctant to institute prosecutions against printers, yet, in this case, I am willing to depart from a general rule ; and unless the printers disavow the nefarious slander, and give up the name of the writer for prosecution, which I authorise you to demand, I shall not fail to bring them before a tribunal of justice.

“ You may make such use of this letter as you may think proper.

“ I am, truly, your friend,

“ DE WITT CLINTON.

“ To JACOB LE ROY, Esq.

“ *Le Roy, Genesee county, N. Y.*”

*" Le Roy, November 13, 1827.*

" MY DEAR SIR,

" Your favor of the 3d inst. came to hand in due course, by which I was much pleased to perceive, that my communication was received in the friendly manner intended. On the receipt of it, I immediately called on the editors of our village paper, and demanded the author of the libellous attack made on you, in their paper of the 18th. They readily gave up the name, which I should have informed you of sooner, but at the request of the gentleman implicated, (whose name is James Ballard,) who wished I should defer writing you, until he could procure some depositions to prove the source from which it had originated. He has this day put me in possession of these documents, with the wish that I should enclose them to you. These papers will enable you to see from whence the slander has its origin. Mr. Ballard's standing here has always been very respectable, and he is a gentleman of considerable property.

" There is no doubt in my mind, that a letter, purporting to have been written by you, approving of this outrage, has been circulated through this country; but whether by the Masons, as a motive to urge on people to this disgraceful transaction, or by other persons for political purposes, I am unable to say. No pains have been spared to satisfy the people, of your being deeply implicated in the affair. The course you have now determined to take, however, will unravel the mystery, and disclose to you a scene of villainy you are not aware of.

" I have shown your letter to many of our respectable citizens, who are perfectly convinced of the infamous slander, from the frank and decisive manner in which you have replied to all the questions submitted in my letter to you of the 29th of last month. A very general wish has been expressed, that I should permit the letter to be published, but

I have declined doing so, until I know your pleasure on the subject. Most respectfully, your friend,

"JACOB LE ROY.

"To his excellency,

"DE WITT CLINTON, *Albany.*"

"*Albany, December 14, 1827.*

"MY DEAR SIR,

"On my return from New-York, last month, I found your letter of the 13th November, Mr. Ballard's of the same date,\* and the affidavits of Franklin Marsh, Hiram Griffen, Elias Cooly and Hollis Pratt,† fixing the authorship of the slanders against me on James Ganson. Between that time and this, my attention has been so entirely engrossed with the recent and approaching session of the legislature, that I had not time to attend to any but public concerns. I now thank you for your very prudent and friendly course. Mr. Ballard's conduct would have appeared in the same light, if, instead of being the trumpeter of a vile slander, and what he must have known to be such, he had consulted me, if he could have possibly wanted any satisfaction, in a case of slander so obviously diabolical. But as he has fixed the authorship on Ganson, I shall require from the latter a written document. If this is not satisfactorily furnished, another course must be pursued. It may be proper to mention, that the Morgan committee of Batavia, have, much in honor of their candor, done justice to my conduct relating to this whole affair.

"I am, dear sir, with my respects to Mrs. Le Roy,

"Your sincere friend,

"DE WITT CLINTON.

"To JACOB LE ROY."

\* Vide Appendix, G.    † Vide Appendix, H.

*"Albany, January 5, 1828.*

**"MY DEAR SIR,**

"Did you receive a letter from me dated the 14th December last? I wish to come to some conclusive result with Ganson. Who is Franklin Marsh, one of the affidavit makers? If Ganson does not make the amende honorable, in writing, I shall institute a prosecution against him, if I find, on the advice of counsel, that it will lie.

"I am your sincere friend,

**"DE WITT CLINTON.**

**"TO JACOB LE ROY."**

*"Le Roy, January 5, 1828.*

**"MY DEAR SIR,**

"I have this day received yours of the 5th, inquiring of me whether a letter written by you on the 14th of last month, had come to hand. I did receive that letter in due course, and did not conceive from its contents, it was your wish that I should have procured Ganson's refutation, but inferred it was your intention to have demanded from him, yourself, such a denial, as you should think satisfactory, or I should have immediately attended to it. I have now had drawn up as strong a denial of the charges, as could be done, to which you have Ganson's signature, and which I hope will meet your approbation.\* I should, were I placed in a similar situation, desire the editors of our paper, to publish all these affidavits, and also Ganson's denial, which would at once satisfy every one that there was a lie between them, and show the baseness of the slander. You will pardon the liberty I take in thus recommending the publishing of these documents; for, I think, as this libel has been openly made, the refutation ought to be equally public.

\* Vide Appendix, I.

"With my respects to Mrs. C. and family, and my sincere wishes, that you may be blessed with many happy returns of the season, believe me, sincerely, your friend,

"JACOB LE ROY.

"To his excellency,

"DE WITT CLINTON, *Albany.*"

"P. S. Franklin Marsh, of whom you make inquiries, is a mason by trade, and with whom I am but little acquainted. I am, however, informed that he is a man whose word is entitled to credit."

The sudden and unexpected decease of the principal in the preceding correspondence, cut it short at this point, and prevented its publication, or the adoption of any other measures in the premises. These interesting papers, and the documents connected with them, are now, consequently, for the first time permitted to see the light. I will not pause to dwell upon them. To comment, would be but to impeach the understanding of the reader. I will, therefore, only add, upon this point, that, if a long chain of circumstances, bearing directly upon his innocence, prove any thing;—if the whole course of his official conduct in this matter, and his *private*, as well as his *public* correspondence, are to be received in evidence;—if the testimony of unimpeachable witnesses, is to have its proper weight;—and, if, superadded to all these, his own solemn declarations, are to be received as the testimony of one, "whose word" but yesterday would have stood against the world," then is the refutation of the foul slander complete: the blot is wiped from the patriot's escutcheon: his name, and his fame, are triumphantly vindicated.

But while I refrain from comment, it is impossible to forego reflection upon the circumstances of the diabolical calumny, thus, as I hope, satisfactorily refuted. That Mor-

gan was basely betrayed, and carried into captivity, we all know. That he was murdered, I have long since ceased to entertain or express a doubt, nor am I aware that in the preceding letters, I have failed, on any proper occasion, to express an abhorrence, not only of that deed, but of the unjustifiable methods that have at any time been taken to screen the perpetrators from punishment. Even-handed justice, however, requires that we should be equally unsparing in the bestowment of merited censure upon those who would pursue their victim beyond the precincts of the grave. Deeply as I deplore and execrate the usurpation by individuals, of the execution of public justice, it is impossible to detach from the mind of any man engaged in furthering its behests, the question of personal malice. The *quo animo* is always sought by every juror, and exerts an influence upon his mind, in all its degrees and relations, from malice prepense, sudden wrath, infatuated zeal, self defence, and monomania, to absolute insanity and idiocy. The three first classes alluded to, are never sanctioned by the tribunals of justice; yet still, in meting out punishment, they are not lost sight of; and in the stigma infixed upon the character of the offender, they receive their appropriate gradation of infamy by the public award. The case then stands thus in contrast—Morgan, a man of no peculiar estimation in society, with no extensive family relations, and, by his own shewing, essentially guilty of perjury, was, for the violation of his oath, unjustifiably put to death by infatuated Masons, not only without authority, but in shameful violation of the laws of the land.

Governor Clinton, on the other hand, holding an important public station—possessed of a reputation dear to himself and valuable to his country—surrounded by a large and interesting family, and extensive connexions—guilty of no crime or indiscretion, on which even party vengeance could,

at any time, fasten, is accused by persons calling themselves Anti-masons, of the double murder of Morgan, and of himself!

By as much as character is dearer to an honorable mind than life, is the atrocity of wantonly destroying the former, more infamous than taking the latter, even without the extenuating apology of infatuation. What relative or friend of Gov. Clinton, would not infinitely have preferred that he should have been murdered, than that his character should have been destroyed by such abominable imputations, if the proofs of their falsity were not, fortunately and triumphantly attainable? That they are so, affords no palliation to the infamy of his accusers;—and the attempt, either in this state, or in Pennsylvania, to sustain the cause of Anti-masonry by traducing the illustrious dead with a calumny so foul and vital, can excite little less abhorrence than the deed it proposes to avenge.

With great regard, I am, &c.

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### LETTER XXX.

NEW-YORK, March 4, 1832.

SIR,

The publication of the entire lectures of the first three degrees of Freemasonry, including the obligations of those degrees, by Miller, from the manuscripts of Morgan, had induced many members of the fraternity, to reflect more seriously than they had previously done, upon the binding efficacy of those obligations, including, of course, those of the higher degrees. Alarmed, as many religious members of the order were, in regard to the moral influence of the institution, as it had been illustrated in the case of Morgan, and the conduct of a considerable portion of the craft re-



specting it, public renunciations had been frequent, almost from the time the accounts of the outrage had been first noised abroad.

These renunciations were not confined to the western section of country, nor to any particular calling. Members of the bar, and of the clerical profession ; the merchant, the mechanic, and the agriculturist, in many parts of the country, within and without the state of New-York, came forward, from time to time, publishing to the world their renunciations of the order, together with their reasons for so doing. It is no part of my duty to canvass the wisdom, the necessity, or the policy, of adopting this method of abjuring the institution, and its obligations. It is sufficient to state the fact ; but while I do this, I am free to declare, that, from the character and intelligence of the greater portion of those thus renouncing, we have no right to question the purity of their motives. Having so renounced, and reasoned themselves into a perfectly sincere belief, that none of their obligations either were, or ought to be, of any binding force whatever, (being, in their opinion, contrary to the spirit both of the civil and the divine law,) a convention of Masons of this description was held at Le Roy, in the county of Genesee, on the 19th of February, 1828.

The object of this convention was an interchange of sentiments upon the subject which was now engrossing so large a portion of the public mind, and a full and free discussion of the principles and obligations of the masonic institution. The convention was opened with religious services by attending clergymen, and organized by the choice of Leonard B. Rose, Esq., as president, and the Rev. David Barnard, secretary. After full discussions had taken place, the convention adopted the following opinions, viz :—In regard to the *antiquity* of the institution, that it was not *ancient* ; on the score of *morals*, that it did not promote *morality* ;—touching its *benevolence*, that it was not *benevolent* ;—re-

specting its *ceremonies*, that they were degrading, and opposed to *christianity*;—and, in fine, that it was the duty of honest Masons to expose the secrets and obligations of the order to the world.

Morgan's book was then examined, and it was declared by the convention to be a full and fair revelation of the first three degrees of speculative Masonry. To the truth of this declaration, thirty-five seceding Masons, of various degrees, "solemnly and sincerely testified," by subscribing their names.

The convention proceeded to make what they have pronounced a full and fair disclosure of the obligations of the four higher degrees of ancient Masonry, together with the degrees of knighthood to the Templar's inclusive. The four former correspond with those contained in "Bernard's *Light on Masonry*," to the general character of which I have been called to testify my own opinion, before a legal commission. It is unnecessary to repeat that opinion in this place. But in regard to the obligations of the Red Cross Knights, and the Templars, as disclosed by this convention, I am free to declare that I know of no such obligations in any degrees. Seven members of the convention are represented in the proceedings, to have been knights, and have sanctioned the obligations to which I refer. But I am at a loss to conjecture where, or in what country, such obligations could have been devised, or by what masonic authority adopted. I have received those degrees, and assisted in conferring them; and certain I am, that such obligations were new to me, when I saw them in the printed report of the proceedings of this convention. My impression is, that they must have been devised westward of Albany, and imposed upon candidates without the sanction of any governing body. Indeed I am authorised to state, that when the forms of those obligations were received in this city, measures were taken by the Grand Encampment to

ascertain whether any encampment under its jurisdiction had in fact ever administered any such obligations, and if so, where, and by whom they had been imposed.

The concluding acts of this convention were, the appointment of a committee "to draft a memorial to Congress on the subject of the prostitution of the fortress of Niagara, to the incarceration of William Morgan, by persons calling themselves Freemasons, without any legal authority for such violence and coercion;" and also the appointment of a committee of arrangements for a great Anti-masonic celebration of the national festival, on the 4th of the ensuing month of July.

The memorial to Congress, as directed by the foregoing resolution, was presented by Mr. Tracy, in the month of May following, and its reference to the judiciary committee suggested. It charged that the military post at Niagara, under the care of officers of the army of the United States, had been made subservient to the illegal course alledged to have been pursued in respect to Morgan, and prayed that an inquiry might be instituted in Congress upon that subject. Several gentlemen spoke on the presentation of the memorial, and among others, Messrs. Tracy and Storrs, of New-York; Barbour, of Virginia; and Wright, of Ohio. It was considered by the house, that the investigation of abuses of that description, if any existed, belonged, in the first instance, to the Executive Department, which had the charge and superintendence of the army. The memorial, which, by the way, was accompanied by no proofs, was therefore referred to the President of the United States; and it was not heard from afterwards. The course of the debate clearly showed, that in the then posture of political affairs, there was a general wish, on all sides, to rid themselves of any inquiry into such a matter: and all parties seemed to acquiesce in the disposition thus made of the memorial. The inquiry had such bearings, in

many directions, that all parties in Congress appeared at a loss how to handle a subject of so much novelty, and the scope of which was not so fully or clearly developed, as to enable any one to foresee the probable effect which the investigation might have on their particular views in the then approaching election.

Another convention assembled at the same place, on the 6th of March following. It consisted of seventy-nine members, representing twelve counties, and comprised a formidable array of talent and high personal character and wealth. General William Wadsworth was chosen president of this convention, and Dr. Matthew Brown and Robert Fleming, Esq. secretaries. It was by this body of citizens, that the Anti-masonic party first received, avowedly, its political "form and pressure." A series of strong resolutions was adopted, embodying, substantially, all the charges that had been preferred against Freemasonry during the controversy, repeating the denunciations of the order, individually and collectively, and inveighing against the press, after the violent example set in the primary meetings of the people the year before. In many respects, the committee, in drafting their resolutions, and the members in adopting them, were not as scrupulous in regard to facts, as they should have been. Among other things the convention resolved, "that we discover in the ceremonies and obligations of the higher degrees of Masonry, principles which deluged France in blood, and which tend directly to the subversion of all religion and government." Now I must be permitted to say—what I think has already been shown in the earlier part of this exposition, that these very respectable gentlemen had made no such discovery. Those degrees, in this country, at least, neither professedly nor covertly, embrace any principles of the kind. The convention also resolved, that they "lamented the entire subjugation of the press, throughout the Union,

"to the control of Freemasonry." Nothing could have been more unjust, or untrue, than this sweeping proscription of the whole of the public press, whatever may have been the conduct of a portion of it, which, I am free to admit, was sufficiently reprehensible. Resolutions were likewise passed, directing the raising of funds for the establishment of additional Anti-masonic presses; thanking the Lewiston committee for its great exertions to investigate the mysteries of the Morgan outrage; and proposing the first great Anti-masonic State Convention, to assemble in Utica, on the 4th of August following. The objects of convoking such a convention, were sufficiently broad, as all will admit. It was stated to be necessary—"to take measures for the destruction of the masonic institution; for sustaining the liberty of the press, and asserting the supremacy of the laws; for protecting the rights and privileges of the citizens against the vindictive persecutions of members of the masonic society; and to take into consideration *such other business* as the said convention shall deem expedient in the furtherance of such objects." A memorial was, moreover, directed to be sent to Congress, similar to that agreed upon by the preceding convention, just noted above; and in conclusion, an address to the people was adopted, well calculated to prolong the excitement, and increase the popular jealousy and hatred of Masonry. Among other reckless assertions, it was declared to be a fact, without qualification, that "to the bosom of Freemasonry every revolution and conspiracy, which has agitated Europe for the last fifty years, might be distinctly traced;"—that its principles were identically the same with Illuminism, &c.,—the entire groundlessness of which assertion I have heretofore shown. In addition to this address, a memorial was adopted, and ordered to be presented to the Legislature, praying for the enactment of laws prohibiting the administration of the masonic obligations.

By the decease of Gov. Clinton, the duties of chief magistrate, for the residue of the term, devolved upon the Lieut. Governor—the Hon. Nathaniel Pitcher. On the 18th of March, the excitement at the west not having abated, and the feeling continuing gradually to spread, Gov. Pitcher transmitted a special message upon the subject, to the Senate—the legislature being then in session. As an apology for taking this course, the acting Governor referred to the constitutional requirement, that the person administering the government should “take care that the laws are faithfully executed.” He then proceeded briefly to refer to the excitement at the west, in consequence of the alledged clandestine removal of a citizen of the state, and the uncertainty of his fate. He also referred to the unsuccessful exertions which the citizens had made to develop the mysterious transaction, and to bring the offenders to justice. He did not directly censure the course that had been adopted by the people; but suggested, that, while the trials and convictions which had taken place, had rather increased the mystery of the transaction, the efforts of the individual citizens, though stimulated by a patriotic zeal, had not always been guided by discretion; and had, therefore, as there was reason to fear, tended rather to prevent, than to promote, a judicial developement of the truth. The fact of the sudden and mysterious disappearance of an important witness, was adverted to in the message as an alarming circumstance;\* and under all the circumstances of the case, it was deemed advisable by the Executive, to recommend an exercise of the constitutional powers of the Legislature, in order to facilitate the discovery and punishment of the offenders. Some action of this kind, was judged by the Ex-

\* In the summer of 1827, Elisha Adams, a witness who had been summoned to attend the trials at Canandaigua, after proceeding as far as Rochester, suddenly disappeared, and was not for a long time heard from, nor could any traces of him be discovered for many months.

ecutive to be equally due to the violated majesty of the laws ; to the apprehensions of our fellow citizens, which never could nor ought to be satisfied until justice was obtained ; and to those who had been, or might be, included in the general and vague suspicions always produced by such transactions. It was, said the message, an imperative duty to the innocent, that those really guilty should be detected and punished. Another inducement for the direct interposition of the government, was found in the belief that such a course would calm the feverish excitement of the public mind, and prevent designing men from perverting that excitement to their own selfish purposes. The enactment of a law was therefore recommended, authorising the appointment of a competent person for the special purpose of investigating the alledged criminal transactions in respect to Morgan, and all the incidents connected therewith—and who should be clothed with full and ample powers to perform all duties necessary to a full and fair judicial determination of the whole matter. The message was referred to the committee on the judiciary, of which Mr. John C. Spencer was chairman.

Perhaps it may be considered an unfair suggestion—but still, I have not been able to banish the impression, that the people may possibly have been indebted for this special message, to the strong and decided indications of the united and vigorous political action, which had then so recently been manifested at the second Le Roy Convention. The number of counties represented in that body, and the weight of character and influence comprised within it, together with its recommendation of a state convention, preparatory to the next ensuing general elections of the state, shadowed forth, too clearly a monition to escape the lynx-eyed politicians by whom the acting Governor was surrounded. But, whatever might have been the motive for the sending in of this message immediately after the proceedings of

the convention had reached Albany, it was a very proper measure in itself, and might, with propriety, have been proposed at an earlier period of the session.

Three days after the receipt of the message, a bill was reported by the committee, in compliance with the executive recommendation. It was debated and adopted in the Senate on the 25th of March, and sent down to the Assembly for concurrence. The bill was taken up in that house, on the 4th of April; and on the 15th it became a law. Daniel Moseley, Esq., of Onondaga county, was immediately commissioned by the Executive, to fill the important office thus created. This appointment did not give the people in the region of the excitement, so much satisfaction as had been felt by the passage of the law. Mr. Moseley was charged with a want both of talents and energy for the situation; and although the senatorial district in which he resided, was strongly of his own political party, yet such were the prejudices excited against him in the public mind, that he failed in an attempt to be elected to the Senate, in the autumn subsequent to his appointment. My own opinion upon the subject is, that injustice was done to Mr. Moseley, touching the discharge of his duties as special commissioner. His labors were as faithful as those of any other counsellor employed in those investigations, and he is moreover a sound and virtuous man, whose fidelity in the transactions referred to, cannot be, and ought never to have been, questioned.

The memorial of the Le Roy Convention, remonstrating against the masonic obligations, and praying for the passage of a law prohibiting them altogether, was presented in the Assembly on the 19th of March—the day after the acting Governor's message to the Senate. This memorial was referred to a select committee, consisting of Messrs. Childs, Granger, and Wardwell. On the 2d of April, following, this committee reported a bill pursuant to the prayer of the



memorialists, which, with the accompanying report, was ordered to be printed. But no further mention of it appears on the legislative journals, and the presumption is, that it was never called up.

Early in the same month, (April,) Messrs. Garlinghouse and Bates, who had been despatched, as I have already stated, to the southwestern part of the territory of the United States, returned from an unsuccessful mission, and made a report of their proceedings to the acting Governor. It was known that Smith and Whitney, had fled to the valley of the Mississippi. The officers went thither, but, although they often heard of the fugitives, yet they could not succeed in arresting them. Repairing to Arkansas, they were furnished by Gov. Izard with the necessary papers, with which they proceeded to cantonment Towson, upon the Red River, twelve hundred miles above its junction with the Mississippi, and arrived there on the 14th of February, 1828. "Mr. Garlinghouse went alone, and privately presented his papers to the commander of the station, while his companion remained without the fort. He exhibited the order of the Governor,—a letter from the Adjutant General of the army, under the direction of the Secretary of War,—and also a letter from Col. Arbuckle, commanding officer at cantonment Gibson, and requested Capt. Hyde, then in command of the station, to furnish assistance for the arrest of King, who, it appeared, was then there. This officer refused to assist himself, or to furnish assistance, or even to furnish a guard for his removal." He proposed, however, to send for a lieutenant to accompany the sheriff to King's store; but the officer thus sent for could not be found: and it afterwards appeared that the captain himself, during the absence of the messenger, held a conversation with the very officer for whom he had sent; and it also appeared, that, after the sheriff had obtained another officer to accompany him to the store, the lieutenant referred

to, and with whom the captain had thus conversed, had already anticipated the sheriff, and taken King away into the woods. Mr. Bates was afterwards informed by the officer himself, of the fact that he did thus take King away, on learning that messengers had arrived to arrest him for the murder of Morgan, and that he had directed King's clerk to take his horse to him, where he was waiting for him in the forest. The officers who had thus favored the escape of the fugitive, were understood to be Masons. To attempt a pursuit, in the vast wildernesses of the west, would have been a hopeless undertaking. The idea was therefore abandoned; and the messengers, after making a fruitless search, even to New-Orleans, for Smith and Whitney, returned to report the circumstances of their bootless mission.

The escape of King, and the manner in which, by masonic connivance and even direct assistance, he had been enabled to flee, gave very great offence, and justly. A representation of the conduct of Capt. Hyde was made to the War Department, and that officer was ordered into arrest, and to repair to this city for trial; but nothing further resulted from that measure. Before, however, sufficient time had elapsed for the public to give full vent to its indignation at the manner in which King had been enabled to elude his pursuers,—that is to say, on the 17th of May, he suddenly re-appeared at Niagara, having voluntarily returned to his former residence—whence his family had not been removed. He immediately published a note in a Lockport paper, under his own signature, addressed to Messrs. Garlinghouse and Bates, informing them of such return, and of his readiness “to transact any business they might have with him.” Attempts had been made during his absence, to procure his indictment for murder, but without success. But he had been indicted for a misdemeanor; and the second day after his apparition, he went voluntari-

ly to the ministers of justice, and was recognized, himself in the sum of one thousand dollars, and two sureties in the sum of five hundred dollars each, for his appearance at the next term of the court. In a week thereafter, he published an address to the public, respecting his case, well calculated to make a favorable impression in his behalf.

This return of Col. King, after the escape at cantonment Towson, and his subsequent conduct, are among the most remarkable incidents of these extraordinary transactions. People knew not what to make of it. His original flight could not have been without cause; nor, unless he had very powerful reasons for so doing, would he voluntarily have retreated four thousand miles distant from his home, and buried himself twelve hundred miles deep in the wilderness, merely for the emolument of the paltry official situation he had obtained. Why, moreover, should he have thus fled from the faces of his pursuers, if he knew he could safely throw himself back into the hands of his accusers, and repose securely upon his innocence? It was, in all respects, an unaccountably strange movement; serving to add another shade to the deep mystery, which it even now seems likely will not be solved in all its ramifications, until the great day of final account.

From this period the character of Anti-masonry began to change. Indeed the effervescence which, during so many months, had kept a large section of the state in ceaseless agitation, had been gradually subsiding for some time. It was in truth impossible that it should be otherwise. There must necessarily be a point, above which the passions cannot rise, and a stage, beyond which popular excitement and delusion cannot be carried. The crises—the highest periods of action—cannot continue long, ere the mind will break, and fall into positive delirium. In these respects, the law of nature is as imperative in the physical, as in the natural world. And while a strong popular excitement by sufficient

causes, may be impelled impetuously forward like the heaving billow of the storm-driven ocean, yet when the storm is spent, it will fall back to its level, like the same angry billow when it breaks. But although the effervescence did thus pass away, and the troubled elements become more tranquil, there was no mitigation of the hatred of Masonry, and no faltering in the determination to put it down. The Anti-masons were less clamorous, perhaps, but not the less resolute in their measures, or fixed in their purposes. Those purposes were still to pursue their investigations in regard to the fate of Morgan—to detect and punish the offenders, if possible—and, in any event, to carry the question to the polls at all our elections. To this end, measures were now taken, and steadily pursued.

Very respectfully yours, &c.

## LETTER XXXI.

NEW-YORK, March 6, 1832.

SIR,

The next trial of persons implicated in the abduction of Morgan, and hitherto the most important in its character and results, was that of Eli Bruce, Orsamus Turner, and Jared Darrow, which took place before the Court of General Sessions of Ontario, at Canandaigua, on the 20th of August, 1828. These defendants, it will be recollected, had been jointly indicted for a conspiracy, at the August term of the same court, in the preceding year. The prosecution was conducted by Daniel Moseley, Esq. the special counsel, assisted by B. Whiting, Esq., the District Attorney. The case was opened to the jury by Mr. Whiting, who had had much experience upon the subject. It was, of course, necessary again to go over with the whole history of the con-

spiracy from the beginning, when the warrant for the alleged larceny was issued against Morgan by Justice Chipman. The only new points elicited by the testimony of this magistrate, were, that when the warrant was granted at the solicitation of Cheseboro, the latter—who well knew that he was going fifty miles into another county, to seize his victim—told the justice that Morgan was then only about six miles off. The warrant was directed “to the sheriff, any constable, or to N. G. Cheseboro, one of the coroners of this county.” The particulars of the arrest of Morgan, were proved by Halloway Hayward, and those of his being taken from the jail at Canandaigua, by the jailor’s wife, as before. Hiram Hubbard, the keeper of a livery stable, who had driven the party from Canandaigua, to eighty or one hundred rods beyond Hanford’s Landing, on the night of the 12th September, again underwent a long examination; but his memory appeared to be very conveniently forgetful. He heard a cry or shriek, while harnessing his horses, but there was no signal for him to start. The general details of the journey were the same as heretofore given, with the exception that at Victor, he did not recollect where they had stopped,—whether at Beach’s tavern, or at some distance beyond—but he declared that he only stopped at the watering trough, and was not certain that any person got out of the carriage there. The testimony upon this point, was widely different from that adduced upon it, at the first trial before Judge Throop, in January, 1827;—and it is surprising how a man could discipline his mind to forget so well. At Rochester, just about day-light, one of the passengers left the carriage, and was gone about fifteen minutes, when, as the witness supposed, the same person returned, and resumed his seat. The witness scarcely recollected any thing; but he presumed that he was told to drive to Hanford’s Landing, as he did drive there, and stopped to obtain provender for his horses, but found none. He then drove fur-

ther on, leaving his passengers, as heretofore recited, about one hundred rods beyond that place, near a piece of woods. He did not recollect being told to keep the curtains of his carriage down, on going out, but he rolled them up before he reached Rochester, on his return. When the passengers left his carriage, he did not observe them, particularly, although he supposed he might have seen them, if he had desired to do so. He left his passengers standing in the road, and did not see them enter any other carriage. He met two carriages on his return to Rochester—one a green one ;—and a man in a sulkey. On the first trial of Cheseboro and others, Hubbard testified that he had not been paid for this trip. He now acknowledged that Cheseboro had paid him some months afterwards, while he was in prison.

Ezra Pratt, the keeper of a livery stable in Rochester, testified, that on the 13th of September, he furnished a hack, either a cinnamon coloured or a green one, to go to the installation at Lewiston. It was called for by a man about day-light, and he was told to charge "*the Grand Chapter pro tem.*," for the use of it. He made the entry thus in his books, and had not been paid for the use of it. He had hired a carriage to George Ketchum, to go to Batavia, about the time of Morgan's arrest at that place—or the day before, he believed. He did not hear of the abduction of Morgan, until some days after it was said to have taken place, and had no knowledge that he had ever been transported in his carriage. He did not know who "*the Grand Chapter pro tem.*," was, but presumed that somebody would call after a while, and pay the carriage hire. A number of other witnesses proved the movements of the carriage at and about Hanford's, under suspicious circumstances. Four or five persons were in the carriage, among whom one of the witnesses recognized Burrage Smith, as he supposed. There was a man on horse-back, who ap-

peared to accompany, or pass the carriage. This man was Edward Doyle, of Rochester. Other witnesses satisfactorily proved a carriage to have passed along the Ridge Road, from the place where Hubbard had left his passengers, towards Lewiston, under extraordinary circumstances; not stopping at public houses, and being drawn by horses belonging to persons living on the road; changed in bye places; driven by men who could not be ordinarily engaged in such an occupation; and generally preceded by some one to procure the necessary relays of horses. Solomon C. Wright, the keeper of the tavern on the Ridge Road, where, as it has been formerly proved, there was a masonic gathering on the 13th., and where the mysterious carriage was driven into the barn, was again examined, but no new evidence was obtained from him. Six miles west of this place, where the road from Lockport—the residence of Bruce—intersects the Ridge Road—lived Col. Mollineaux, to whom, in the night of the 13th, Bruce applied for horses to go to Lewiston. Bruce called him up from his bed—obtained the horses, and with the mysterious carriage proceeded forward, as I have formerly mentioned. Corydon Fox was likewise again a witness on the present trial. His testimony corresponded in the main, with that formerly given, as to the arrival of the carriage in Lewiston, and its being driven into a back street in the night. To this place he drove another carriage, took the passengers out of the former, and proceeded down to Youngstown. The particulars of the visit to the house of Col. King; his joining them; and the leaving of the whole party near the burying ground, corresponded with his former relations. When the carriage started from Lewiston, Bruce got upon the box, and told him to drive to Col. King's. James Perry, of Lewiston, who had testified on the former trial, that, while watching with a sick person on the back street where the carriage came up, he saw two persons transfer a third from

one carriage into another, repeated his statement as before. The person was without a hat, and appeared to be intoxicated. He also saw them take something like a jug from the first carriage. But Fox swore that he saw nothing of this, and, indeed, observed nothing strange or unusual in the whole affair. He had often been called up before of nights—and though never engaged in smuggling, was not accustomed to ask questions about other people's business. In a part of this testimony, it will be observed, Fox forgot his revelations to Mosher, and he also now swore that he had no recollection of having spoken of the circumstances of that night, as being in any wise strange. *But to a question whether he had not been taken into a lodge on the day after this transaction, Fox appealed to the court for protection against questions that might criminate himself.* The court ruled that he need not answer the interrogatory.

Edward Giddings, a personage of great importance in the future developments of this history, was now called upon the stand as a witness, but objected to by Mr. Griffin, of counsel for the defence, on the ground of his being an unbeliever in the christian religion, and, therefore, an incompetent witness. A number of witnesses were called to establish this position. A man named David Morrison, testified that he had known Giddings intimately since 1820; had often heard him declare his opinion that there was no God; and that a belief in any thing spiritual superior to nature, was contrary to reason and philosophy. Giddings used the term God, as equivalent to the laws of nature; but he always admitted that there was an inward monitor pointing out good and evil. Morrison said he had received a letter from Giddings, in 1826, containing the same sentiments, but *he had never responded to that letter in writing.* Another witness, named Gray, from Canada, who had resided a few days in the house of Giddings, in 1826, proved that the latter had no belief whatever in futurity,



and prided himself on his philosophy. The Bible, he said, was a pretty story to amuse children with. Giddings had a fine library, and witness said they were in the habit of reading and admiring Volney's Ruins. In all respects, other than his religious views, Giddings was a man whose character was much respected. Gray first became acquainted with Giddings in a masonic lodge ; and on his cross examination he admitted that he had come over from Canada voluntarily to testify against him, because, as it was feared, he, (Giddings,) was probably intending to testify something against Mr. M'Bride. Another witness swore, that in 1816, Giddings had inquired of him what he thought about the being called God—adding, himself, that he would as soon kneel down to a cat, a dog, or a horse, as to the being so called. The counsel for the defence then read the letter of Giddings, above referred to, addressed to Morrison. In this letter, among many other specimens of infidelity, were the following sentiments.—“ God has the same care of “ a man as of an insect, of an insect as of a tree, of a tree as “ of a stone. With him there can be no difference or distinction between beauty and deformity, virtue and vice, “ perfection and imperfection. Prayers are but mockery “ to his name, and ought not to be encouraged.” “ All “ [that] men can do, cannot change him. He is not susceptible of persuasion, and, as relates to man, he is incapable of love or hatred.” “ This is my notion of virtue and vice ; that they do not refer to any future time, “ but relate altogether to man in his present state.” “ My “ views are not in accordance with the Bible, for that book “ represents the deity as vindictive, revengeful and inconsistent.” The date of this letter was April 10th, 1827. The counsel for the defence, himself, swore, that in the preceding month of May, he had called on Giddings, and held some conversation with him about the approaching trials. He told Giddings that they meant to shut out his testimony,

but they were afraid Mr. B——, (a zealous proselyting professor of religion, since deceased,) would convert him. To this Giddings replied that B—— was the last man who could convert him.

To sustain the character of Giddings, and counteract the preceding testimony against him, a number of persons were called by the prosecution. One witness testified that he had known Giddings fourteen years, and had often held conversations with him on religious subjects, in which he had always expressed his belief in a supreme being. He had heard him so express his belief within fifteen months preceding the examination. He had never heard Giddings say that man was not responsible to God, or that God would not punish man; and it was never questioned in the neighborhood, but that he believed in a supreme being, and relied upon his protection. Another witness testified to a perfectly accidental conversation with Giddings, just about one year previously, while waiting at the ferry. This conversation was astronomical, and Giddings then avowed his belief in a deity, who created and superintended all things. Nothing, he said on that occasion, came by chance. Another witness, (the new sheriff of Niagara,) who had known Giddings seven years, having heard that he did not believe in the existence of a God, asked him how it was. Giddings replied that he believed in an overruling providence, or supreme being,—he [the witness] not recollecting which term he had used. Giddings also added his belief that virtue was rewarded, and vice punished. The counsel for the prosecution here put in and read two letters;—the first *was from Morrison to Giddings, in which he responded fully to the sentiments contained in the letter quoted above, although M.* had just sworn that he had written him no reply. The second was a letter dated Cincinnati, Ohio, April 19, 1818, from Mr. Giddings to his wife, in which he twice recogniz-

ed a God, and earnestly invoked his protection for health and safety to return to his family.

The prosecution then proposed to adduce testimony of the good character of Giddings; but the court remarked, that moral character, however stainless, would not obviate the objection. The law requires a higher sanction for the administration of an oath. The question of admitting the witness to be sworn, was argued at length by the counsel of both sides; but the court, after consultation, ruled that the sentiments of Giddings rendered his testimony inadmissible. A person, to be a competent witness, must believe in a supreme being who holds men accountable for their conduct. No man, said Judge Howell, can be a witless, who denies this accountability.

Elisha Adams was then called upon the stand. The counsel for the defendants remarked, that as Mr. A. stood indicted for a participation in the same offence, they hoped the court would be careful that his rights were not invaded. A long examination followed, but nothing of importance was elicited from this witness. The only fact bearing upon the question, was an acknowledgment that Giddings came into the woods where he was at work, and requested him to go and see Col. King, Dr. Maxwell, and Obed Smith. On his cross-examination, he said this incident occurred the spring succeeding the outrage upon Morgan; but he was also compelled to acknowledge the fact, that King had left the country in the previous autumn, and was not at Youngstown at any time in the spring of 1827.

The next witness called was John Jackson; and as his evidence affords a striking specimen of that description of testimony which has contributed so much to the public dissatisfaction in regard to what have been called "masonic witnesses," I think it important to give his examination without much abridgment. The report I am compressing,

is that of the Anti-masonic Inquirer, of Rochester, which Mr. Moseley, the special counsel, has certified to a committee of the legislature to be substantially correct. John Jackson lived at Lockport, in 1826, but was at the house of Giddings on the night of the 13th of September; and on the morning of the 14th—

“ They were all going to the installation at Lewiston; Mr. Giddings did not go; witness did not go with the rest; Giddings went to the fort in the morning, accompanied by witness; don't recollect what Giddings carried with him; it might have been provisions; Giddings had some drink too; thinks he did take some food up; don't know whether it was in his hand, on his arm, or tied round his body; Giddings went *towards* the magazine; witness did not *see* him open it; believes he saw the door of the magazine open; supposes Giddings opened it; did not *see* any body in the magazine; heard a noise; don't know what it was; it was a voice from the magazine; did not *see* any body; don't know whether it was a man or a woman; it was the voice of a person; did not *see* Giddings leave any thing in the magazine; don't know that there is any window to the magazine; witness did not stay there long; don't recollect what conversation Giddings had with the person in the magazine; saw Giddings have a pistol at the house; don't recollect seeing it at the magazine; Giddings presented the pistol to witness, but he declined taking it; did not see Giddings lay it down; heard something said at the magazine about a pistol, but don't recollect certain what it was; don't know *exactly* whether Giddings opened the door of the magazine; thinks the door was open, and that Giddings conversed with a man who was inside; don't know but Giddings said, “ here is some victuals and drink for you;” did not stand very near the magazine door; might have been two rods off; don't recollect but that Giddings might have spoken to the voice within, about the pistol. When Giddings opened the door, witness *might* have been looking the other way; Giddings did not go into the magazine; the noise was not very loud; don't recollect any words; heard the noise after he got away; he was for making off when he heard the voice; did not *see* Giddings leave any thing with the man; did not see him take any thing back to the house; if he took provisions up, he presumed that he left them; saw Giddings take the pistol up as they started to go to the fort; witness thought it was time to be missing, when he heard the noise; Giddings did talk to the man in the magazine; witness did not stop to see any door shut.”

To a question whether the witness carried the pistol to the person who owned it, the counsel for the defendants ob-

jected, which objection the court sustained. The court also decided that it was improper to ask the witness if Giddings told him that the person in the magazine was William Morgan. On a second call to the stand, Jackson testified that he had told a person at Lewiston, on the same day, that a man was confined in the magazine ; but the person to whom he thus told it, was now dead.

Another witness was down at the fort three or four days after the installation on the 14th September : he had heard that a man was imprisoned there, and talked with Giddings about it, but he did not visit the fort himself, although Giddings went thither while witness was at his house.

The testimony on behalf of the prosecution was here rested, and the counsel for the defence called Nicholas G. Cheseboro ; but after a few moments of consultation, declined having him sworn.

The counsel for the prosecution then stated that the exclusion of the testimony of Mr. Giddings had entirely deprived them of their testimony against Turner and Darrow, two of the defendants. It was therefore proper for the jury to pass upon their cases at that stage of the proceedings. These parties were accordingly acquitted *instantly*.

Gen. Matthews, of counsel for the defence, now interposed an objection to the validity of the indictment. That instrument set forth a conspiracy at Canandaigua, in the county of Ontario, to imprison and kidnap William Morgan, and that in pursuance of that conspiracy, he was imprisoned and carried away, or in other words abducted. The truth was, that Morgan was imprisoned there, in Ontario county ; and so far as Bruce was concerned, according to the evidence, he had only helped to carry him away in Niagara county, and confine him there. If Bruce had therefore committed any offence, it was that of false-imprisonment, in which act the indictment must be merged. That offence

being local, the counsel contended that the county of Ontario could have no jurisdiction in the case,—the defendant having a right at common law to be tried in the county where the crime is proved to have been committed.

The points thus raised, were ably and ingeniously argued upon both sides. The court entertaining doubts upon the question thus presented, intimated that should the defendant be convicted, the sentence would be suspended until the matter should have been carried up and decided in the Supreme Court.

W. H. Adams, Esq., summed up the case to the jury for the defence, and Mr. Moseley closed on the part of the people. After an absence of four hours, the jury returned into court with a verdict of GUILTY.

I must confess my surprise at this result, because, strong as were the circumstances to warrant the belief that Morgan was in the mysterious carriage that passed along the Ridge Road, on the 13th of September, and also that he was imprisoned in the magazine, I cannot perceive the warrant which the jury had for rendering such a verdict. For as yet there was no proof identifying Morgan, either as having been in the carriage, or in the fort. No doubt existed of the truth of the verdict, but it was clearly not rendered according to law and evidence. But that is a question of little moment for present consideration.

The rejection of Giddings as a witness, was a sore disappointment to the people. It was known from the partial disclosures he had made to the grand jury, upon which all the above named defendants were indicted, and from many other of his declarations, that his testimony, if received, would be of the highest importance. Notwithstanding, moreover, the liberality of his opinions in matters of religion, his general character for truth and veracity, and in all other respects, as a respectable and moral citizen, was decidedly good. The facts *intended* to have been proved

by Giddings, in regard to Turner and Darrow, were these: It had been well ascertained by this time, that three or four projects had been originally devised for carrying Morgan away. One was organized at Buffalo, to take him from Batavia thence; a second was to have taken him from Batavia to Niagara direct, passing through Lockport. The third, for taking him to Canandaigua, was executed. But in connexion with the second, it was believed that Turner and Darrow—both living at Lockport, and the former the editor of a paper at that place,—had been sent to Canada to negotiate with the Masons there for the reception of Morgan, when he should arrive. Failing in this project, they returned, and, with Col. King and Giddings, made arrangements for imprisoning their victim in the magazine at Niagara, until the question of his final disposition should be determined. Such, briefly, were the facts, respecting Turner and Darrow, which it was intended to have been proved by Giddings, as also the personal identity of the person confined in the Magazine, according to the evasive, quibbling and reluctant testimony of Jackson.

It is true that a part of the testimony against Giddings—in regard to his religious belief—was of a questionable character. The first witness, however, had neutralized his own testimony by swearing to what was undeniably proved not to be true, before he left the court; and another witness had avowedly come from Canada, a long distance, as a volunteer to protect a gentleman who was more than suspected of some participation in the outrage. But still, the burden of proof was against Giddings, and the court were clearly right in rejecting him, both by the principles of the constitution and the common law. The courts of this state, when the bench was occupied by Kent, Spencer, Thompson and Platt—ranking amongst the most exalted jurists of the country—had maintained the principle—incor-

porated, I believe in one of our statutes—that a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, and a future state of rewards and punishments, is an indispensable requirement in a witness. In the formation of our new constitution, in 1821, a strong attempt had been made to overthrow this principle; but the project was successfully resisted by the then Chancellor Kent, and Chief Justice Spencer, together with the late Rufus King, Daniel D. Tompkins and others, who contended that atheists and blasphemers must be held in check, or we should endanger the security of life, liberty and property, and the comfort and happiness of our families. Chancellor Kent said in that convention—indeed it was admitted on all hands, for it could not be denied,—that while the Christian Religion had never been declared, or intended to be declared, the legal religion of the state, yet it was *in fact*, the religion of the people of the state. It was the foundation of all belief and expectation of a future state, and the source and security of moral obligation. The statute directing the administering of an oath, referred to the Bible as the sanction to it, on the ground that the Bible was a volume of divine inspiration, and the oracle of the most affecting truths that could command the assent, or awaken the fears, or exercise the hopes, of mankind. Mr. King observed in the course of the debates to which I have referred, that while the religions of all mankind are by our laws tolerated, yet the religious professions of the Pagan, the Mahometan, and the Christian, are not, in the eye of the law, of equal truth and excellence. According to the christian system, men pass into a future state of existence, where the deeds of their lives become the subject of reward or punishment;—the moral law rests upon the truth of this doctrine, without which it has no sufficient sanction. Our laws constantly refer to this revelation, and by the oath which they prescribe, we appeal to the Supreme Being, so to deal with us hereafter, as we observe the obligation of our oaths,



The pagan world were, and are, without the mighty influence of this principle, which is proclaimed in the christian system—their morals were destitute of its powerful sanction, while their oaths neither awakened the hopes, nor the fears, which a belief in Christianity inspires. Vice President Tompkins maintained the same doctrines, insisting that the principle must be preserved, to suppress those outrages on public opinion and public feeling, which would otherwise reduce the community to a state of barbarism, corrupt its purity, and debase the mind.\* The principle was retained: and under it, the testimony of Giddings, on that occasion, was rightly rejected.

I am, sir, yours, &c.

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### LETTER XXXII.

NEW-YORK, March 8, 1832.

SIR,

The general election of this state, occurring in the autumn of 1828, connected as it was, with the last election of President of the United States, and as both were, with the progress of Anti-masonry, requires a passing notice in this place. That election was considered of the highest importance, both in reference to the affairs of the state and nation. On the decease of Gov. Clinton, the power of the state had fallen entirely into the hands of those who had been the most bitter and persevering in their opposition to him while living. Those, therefore, who had lost power by that melancholy event, were anxious again to recover it, and to place the executive department in the hands of some efficient statesman, who would preserve the dignity of

\* Vide Carter & Stone's Reports, N. Y. Convention, pp. 463—465, and 574—576.

our state government, by administering it for the benefit of the entire people, rather than merely to answer the selfish purposes of a party. In regard to the election of President of the United States, likewise, deep solicitude was felt for the result.

Through the whole contest of the election of 1824, the people of this state had been very decidedly in favor of the gentleman who succeeded, and of whom I should probably speak more at large at this moment, were it not for considerations of delicacy. And although the politics of New-York have not been remarkably stable, yet for the first two years of the administration to which I refer, it received the cordial support of a very large majority of the people.

There had, it is true, been a great and visible change in the sentiments of a portion of the people, arising from the change of position of certain leading politicians who have signalized themselves in wielding the destinies of parties in this state ; but it was still believed, by the National Republicans, that on a fair trial of strength, notwithstanding the defections which had been witnessed on every side, a handsome majority would yet be found sustaining an administration of whose measures, irrespective of men, no complaint had been made. But in order to justify such an expectation, it was indispensably necessary that all those opposed to the reigning powers at Albany, should act in concert. No party could shut their eyes to the fact, that, as the Antimasons had been continuing and extending their political organization through the spring and summer, with great industry and activity, no inconsiderable array of their strength would be found at the polls of the western elections ; and the political influence of that new party was rapidly extending into other sections of the state. Unfortunately, however, for the National Republicans, the accessions to the new party, were chiefly from their own ranks—the more rigid

party discipline of the Tammany party, being at all times much better calculated than that of their opponents, to prevent desertions. While, therefore, the friends of the then administration, were thus divided by this novel schism of Anti-masonry, the friends of the central power at Albany, having, after two years of considerate balancing upon the neutral ground of non-committalism, determined, in 1827, to sustain the pretensions of General Jackson,—had been reinforced by a portion of the old Clintonians proper, and the disappointed expectants of place, of all parties.

These circumstances alone would have rendered the position of the National Republicans sufficiently difficult, but there were other peculiarities in the case, which added seven-fold to these perplexities. The great body of the supporters of the administration, and who were in favor of re-electing the President, in opposition to General Jackson, in the old parts of the state, where Anti-masonry was little known, cared not a rush whether the candidates for Governor and Lieut. Governor were Masons or not. But the Anti-masons were determined, not only that their candidates should *not* be Freemasons, but that they *should* be Anti-masons: while a large number of our most zealous and worthy political friends,—soundly with us both in state and national politics,—being unrenouncing Freemasons, were so bitterly hostile to the spirit of Anti-masonry, that we anticipated,—not without reason, as it proved in the end,—that great difficulties would be encountered in bringing them to act together upon any subject. Still, discordant as were the materials, it was essential to success, that they should be brought to act together. In regard to measures of public policy, however, both state and national, there was no essential difference of opinion between the Anti-masons and the National Republicans; and hopes were for a long time entertained, that an honorable compromise might be effected, which would be mutually satisfactory.

The Le Roy Convention of March 6—8, had prescribed the 4th of August as the day for holding their state convention at Utica. It was well understood that Mr. FRANCIS GRANGER would be named as their candidate for Governor. This gentleman, a son of the former distinguished Post Master General, and inheriting much of his father's genius and popular address, by a short and brilliant career in the state legislature, had rendered himself a very general favorite among the people. His course in the House of Assembly, upon the Anti-masonic question, had been fair and liberal, and yet so much in favor of the Anti-masons, that they had set their hearts upon his election as Governor. It being also well understood that the national administration had no more decided friend than Mr. Granger, in this state, his Anti-masonic friends flattered themselves that the National Republican Party, although at that time out-numbering them in the proportion of nearly *four to one*, would unite with them in that nomination. The position, likewise, of Mr. Granger, as a western man,—living in the richest and most beautiful portion of our state, from whence a Governor had never been selected,—and where he would be supported, as it was supposed, with the greater unanimity, by a western *esprit de corps*, gave him another advantage.

Still, it was feared, by the veteran politicians,—for the younger men were generally in favor of Granger,—that he was rather too young a man to be proposed as a candidate for the chief magistracy of the state. His fine talents, and his great personal worth, were universally conceded; but in addition to his want of years, it was apprehended that he was not yet sufficiently known in the older parts of the state, to command a strong vote for the office of Governor. There were too many important considerations involved in that election, to justify rash experiments. Hence it was deemed advisable to convene an administration convention at Utica, to meet a few days earlier than the day on which

the Anti-masons had been summoned. The object was neither to discard Mr. Granger, nor to irritate his friends; but, if possible, to conciliate them by measures, in which, if they were reasonable men, as it was hoped they were, they would acquiesce,—in which event, victory over the combined forces, and parti-colored banner of our opponents, would be certain and triumphant.

For this purpose, it was necessary to select a candidate for Governor, standing prominently before the public for his talents and virtues, *and who, withal, was no Freemason.* By voluntarily making this concession to the Anti-masons, and in connexion with such a candidate, of high and exalted worth, having Mr. Granger for the office of Lieut. Governor, a confident expectation was entertained, that there might be a thorough understanding, and a perfect coincidence of action. Exactly such a candidate was found in the person of SMITH THOMPSON—then, as now, one of the firmest pillars of the national judiciary. He was most reluctant to allow his name to be used, and never fully gave his consent;—but his long and useful public life,—his great purity of character,—his ripe scholarship,—his eminent services upon the bench of the Supreme Court of this state; in the cabinet of President Monroe; and in the situation which he yet adorns,—together with the fact that he had never been a Freemason,—pointed him out as *the* man, and the *only* man, who could render the most essential service to his country, in that emergency. Under these circumstances, therefore, he was prevailed upon by the most pressing solicitation of his friends, to allow the use of his name as a candidate for the office of Governor. The National Republican Convention convened at Utica, on the 23d of August, and with great enthusiasm and unanimity, nominated this gentleman for Governor, and Mr. Granger for the second office of the state. Never was a nomination more cordially received by the party for whose support it was intended, than this, and the prospect of success was thought to be very fair.

The 9th of August speedily came, and with it the Anti-masonic Convention. But instead of showing any disposition to unite upon those nominations, there was a sudden determination to oppose them. It was not enough that Judge Thompson was *not a Mason*; they had no evidence that he was *an Anti-mason*. Nor, if he had been such, would that have been sufficient;—to be entitled to their support, he must be an Anti-mason, selected and nominated by themselves alone. This convention, therefore, proceeded to nominate an independent ticket for Governor and Lieutenant-Governor—naming Francis Granger for the former office, and Mr. John Crary for the latter. Mr. C. very promptly accepted the nomination, although he had indirectly promised to decline, should Mr. Granger do so, and, only two months before, had apparently been among those who were most anxious to have Messrs. Thompson and Granger nominated by the friends of the administration.

At the time the second nomination was made, Mr. Granger had not accepted the first; and all eyes were now turned to the west, to learn the result of his decision. It was still hoped by the National Republicans, that he would choose to abide their nomination,—in which event it was presumed the Anti-masons would not think of naming another candidate, but generally acquiesce in the first nomination. After nearly a month's consideration,—that is to say, on the 30th of August,—Mr. Granger made his election. He had been placed in a very difficult and delicate position, by his friends of both parties; but at length, in a letter equally creditable to his head and his heart, declined the Anti-masonic nomination for the higher office, and accepted that which had been proffered him first. But the satisfaction of the National Republicans at this result, was only momentary, and they were soon taught that they might as well attempt to grasp the lightning, or draw out leviathan with a hook, as divert the new party from its purposes. The whole mass of it

turned their backs upon the previous state nominations, almost as one man, and nominated Solomon Southwick as a candidate for Governor! Not that they thought him a proper person for that station,—not that there was the remotest possibility of his success,—not that they even desired success. But they were angry at having their favorite candidate taken from them, and this last selection, as they openly told us, was made for the purpose of showing the irrepressible energy, and the indomitable spirit, of Anti-masonry!

With the month of September came the Tammany-Jackson Convention, at Herkimer, at which Martin Van Buren was nominated for Governor, and our present Governor, Throop, for his Lieutenant. Divided as were the friends of the national administration, none was so blind as not to foresee, that the contest for the executive offices of the state, was hopeless. Gen. Jackson, however, was a Freemason, and Mr. Adams was not,—and hopes were entertained that from this circumstance, the opponents of the former would present an unbroken front upon the presidential election, whatever might be their minor differences. But “unto-ward circumstances” seemed to tread each other’s heels. Many of the papers then in opposition, with a degree of recklessness but too common in our political controversies, began to insinuate, and soon afterwards boldly to declare, that Mr. Adams was a Freemason, as much so as General Jackson. The natural effect of this assertion was to drive a portion of the Anti-masons back upon their original partialities in the presidential contest, regardless of their connexion with the new party. To counteract this effect, an individual at Canandaigua who had some time previously written directly to Mr. Adams for information upon that point, now published his reply, although Mr. A. had expressly enjoined his correspondent not to publish it. Unfortunately, as it proved, though evidently undesigned by

the writer of the letter, it contained an expression which gave offence to many thousands of those most sensitive of all beings, the acting Freemasons. In stating that he was not a Mason, the writer had simply added, "that he never should be one." Nor was it very likely, after arriving at his years, that he ever would, even though Morgan and Anti-masonry had never been known. But all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye; and although the letter was strictly confidential, and the gentleman to whom it was addressed was positively charged not to publish it, yet the unfortunate expression was greedily seized upon by the party jackalls, for the purposes of mischief, and many were the good men who worked themselves into the belief that they themselves, and the whole masonic fraternity, had been grievously insulted! Certain it is, that the misrepresentation of this very innocent affair, had considerable effect in this state; while it is believed that the vote of Ohio for Gen. Jackson, was justly to be attributed to the masonic indignation kindled there upon the subject of that letter.

The friends of the administration had yet another misfortune to encounter. Just on the eve of the election, when it was too late to counteract the calumny, a poor wretch in the county of Onondaga,—then the eastern boundary of Anti-masonry,—was induced to charge Mr. Adams with falsehood, in having denied that he was a Mason, and by solemn affidavit to swear that he not only knew to the contrary, but that he had repeatedly sat in lodges with him, and that even so lately as 1817 or 1818, when, as he averred, Mr. A. had made a visit to Pittsfield, Mass. So high did this profligate witness declare the masonic character of the President to be, that extra lodges were called in his honor, which he attended, the deponent himself being present! The boldness and particularity of these charges, made under the solemnity of an oath, were appalling. Those ac-



quainted with the high and unblemished character of the President, knew that a foul perjury had been committed, as the last deperate resort of party ; but among the common people, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to counteract so audacious an imposture. The western country was flooded with hand-bills containing the perjuries of this wretched instrument of political knavery ; and although an express was sent to Pittsfield, and counter-affidavits obtained, establishing the falsehood of the tale beyond contradiction, yet the poison had done much of its work, before the antidote could be applied.\*

Such is a rapid view of the circumstances under which the elections of New-York were held, in November, 1828, when Anti-masonry first took the field as an organized political party, for state and national purposes. In regard to the presidential election, all was done by the National Republicans, that, under such circumstances, could reasonably be required of them. They lacked but one of carrying an equal number of the electors, with their opponents,—and that one was lost by a providential occurrence. In the state election, Mr. Van Buren received 136,785 votes ; Judge Thompson, 106,415 ; and 33,335 votes were madly thrown away upon Mr. Southwick,—by which means Mr. Van Buren came into the executive chair of New-York, by a plurality only. Had the votes given for Mr. Southwick been cast upon Judge Thompson, the political complexion of New-York would at the present time have been widely different.

This letter may perhaps be considered rather as an episode, than as forming a part of a continuous history ; but

\* Mr. Adams was at Washington, in the discharge of his duties as Secretary of State, at the time he was alledged by the wretched affidavit-maker to have been in Pittsfield, in attendance upon the lodges, and, indeed, at that time had never been in that delightful town !

it seems, nevertheless, to be an essential link in the chain, presenting, as it does, a view of the peculiar traits of the Anti-masonic party, as they were then developed, and without which its history would not be complete.

I am, sir, yours, &c.

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## LETTER XXXIII.

NEW-YORK, March 10, 1832.

SIR,

An organized political party, exhibiting, in the first year of its existence, a force of thirty-three thousand and upwards, and increasing daily, not only by accessions from both of the other parties, (as men became converts to Anti-masonry from principle, or as the aspiring beheld new paths opening to the foot of "young ambition's ladder,") was not likely to escape the keen observation of the new chief magistrate. The subject of the outrage upon Morgan, and the consequent excitement, was, therefore, solemnly presented to the consideration of the legislature, in the opening message of the session commencing on the 6th of January, 1829. "That an act," said his excellency, "so destructive to the peace of society, and the safety of its members, should have made a deep impression upon the public mind, ought not to surprise us. It would have been an unfavorable indication of the state of our morals, and our respect for the laws, had it been otherwise. We have accordingly witnessed an excitement on the subject, of great interest and extent, amongst a portion of our citizens greatly and justly distinguished for their piety, industry and intelligence. It would not be extraordinary if attempts should be made to pervert this honest indignation of the people, to selfish and sinister purposes.

"But the character of those who really feel what they profess on this subject, affords us the best security, that the success of such unworthy schemes cannot be great, or of long duration." Governor Van Buren then repeated what his immediate predecessor in the state administration, had said before him, respecting the duty of maintaining the supremacy of the laws, and pledged his best endeavors to pursue the legal investigations of the subject, that the innocent might be relieved from suspicion, and the guilty brought to exemplary punishment. On the whole, the matter was adroitly managed in the message. The original excitement was justified and commended; the people engaged in it were flattered; and the true thorough-going party men were admonished, that it would be unsafe to enlist in that cause, since it could not be of long duration.

Accompanying the message was a formal report of Mr. Moseley, the special commissioner, rendering an account of his proceedings in executing the difficult trust confided to him by his appointment. After dwelling upon the difficulties and embarrassments of the case, Mr. Moseley informed the governor, that he had traversed one indictment with success, and had traced Morgan to the magazine of Fort Niagara, where he was in confinement on the 14th of September, 1826. "Here," said the commissioner, "are the boundaries of the testimony. As to his fate subsequently thereto, it is not yet developed; nor can it be anticipated, with much confidence, to be judicially determined, by any tribunal over which men have control."

That part of the message relating to this subject, together with the commissioner's report, was referred to a select committee, both in the Senate and Assembly. The committee of the Senate reported on the 14th of February; and in reviewing the whole case presented to their consideration, occasion was taken to rebuke his excellency for the implied censure of the political action of the Anti-ma-

sons. They declared that the political movements to which the governor had alluded, had been characterized "by great devotion to principle, and activity and firmness in pursuit of the objects they had proposed." These movements they maintained, had "proceeded so immediately from the bosom of the people, that the ordinary restraints of parties and their discipline, together with the efforts of those politicians who have heretofore inflamed public opinion, had been laid aside and regarded with utter indifference. Satisfied beyond all question, that the evils inflicted on the state and country, by secret, self-created societies, were a thousand fold greater than any that for many years past had been conjured up by the devices of cunning politicians, the people," it was said, "have sought with wonderful unity of design, of principle and of effort, to destroy, by the peaceful exercise of their rights at the polls, the existence of the masonic, as well as all other secret associations."

The report of the committee of the House of Assembly, was presented two days afterwards—the 16th. This was a more ample statement than that of the other committee, extending, with the documents annexed, to nearly seventy large pages. In presenting the history of the case, the same ground was necessarily travelled over again, without the discovery of any new facts. The report of Mr. Moseley, which had been submitted to the committee with the message, had been received with disappointment by the public, because it was thought the commissioner had not entered so thoroughly into the matter as he might have done, and had not made as many disclosures, or indulged in so many dark speculations, as the public expectation demanded, and the public taste required. Entertaining, perhaps, a common feeling with the people on the subject, the committee addressed letters to the special commissioner, and also to Mr. Whiting, the efficient district attorney

of Ontario, who, as we have seen, had had far the greatest experience in these peculiar investigations, to know if either of these gentlemen had any further information in their possession, which could properly be imparted to the legislature. Mr. W. wrote a very sensible communication in reply, giving his views of the case, and such an historical synopsis of the proceedings and developements made, as were deemed suitable for the information and consideration of the committee. "Down to this time," said Mr. W., "I am not aware that any proof has been given on the traverse of an indictment, identifying Morgan at Niagara. It can now be established that he was in the carriage which passed on the Ridge Road, on the 13th of September. Such is my information from a source in which I have every confidence. This proof has not been in our power until very lately. No person who was engaged in the conspiracy at the frontier, except Bruce, has been convicted. Judgment has not yet been given against him, by reason of a question of law pending before the Supreme Court, and which is not yet decided." In regard to the outrage, Mr. Whiting, himself a mason, expressed the following opinion. "The abduction of Morgan is a singular and striking event in our history; and as in case of other irretrievable evils, it is easier to lament it than to find a remedy. I have no hesitation in saying, that it has resulted from the confidence which members of the masonic society have felt in its power and influence; from a false estimate of the nature of that institution, and from an opinion that they were bound to preserve it from violation and injury." In conclusion he adds,—"It is worthy of remark, that it has been proved or conceded, that all those who have engaged in these outrages, were members of the masonic fraternity,—a fact not without meaning in reference to the objects of the conspiracy."

Mr. Moseley's reply to the committee, was short, and to the purpose. He informed them, in substance, that he had not submitted to the Executive a full report, because, in his opinion, a just sense of propriety would not warrant the publication of facts yet to become the subject of judicial investigation. There were already sufficient difficulties in the way of empannelling juries, and he wished not to increase these embarrassments. He informed the committee, however, that since writing his report, he had elicited additional and material testimony in relation to the *identity* of Morgan, and some precise circumstances that occurred in carrying him off. He had also, he said, been put in possession of information of a *graver* character, from a source entitled to credit. The committee went largely into a discussion of the nature and tendency of the masonic obligations, as they had been disclosed in part by Morgan, and the residue by the Le Roy Convention. These obligations received their most pointed condemnation. In conclusion, they reported in favor of continuing the office of special commissioner for prosecuting the investigations, and, in order to guard against the repetition of similar offences, they likewise reported a bill prohibiting the administering of extra-judicial oaths. The first of these recommendations was adopted by the legislature. The second was not.

Notwithstanding the abatement of the popular clamor marking the earlier history of the excitement, yet the Anti-masonic feeling was sinking more deeply into the minds of the people, and its influence continued gradually to extend. Nor were the leaders sparing of time or money to sustain the cause in which they had embarked. The result of the preceding elections at the west, had taught them that they had obtained a foot-hold, as a political party, and they were resolved to lay its foundations broad and deep. For this purpose, another state convention had been summoned to meet at Albany, on the 19th of February, "to deliberate

“upon, and adopt such measures as might be deemed best calculated to vindicate the laws of the land from masonic violence, and to redeem the principles of civil and political liberty from masonic encroachments.” The county meetings for selecting delegates to compose this convention, it was wisely considered, would again serve to prevent the public attention from slumbering upon the subject ; and each meeting afforded a fresh opportunity of embodying additional appeals to popular passion and prejudice, in the form of addresses, reports, and resolutions. Nor was the occasion left unimproved. At the Genesee Convention held for this purpose, one subject was discussed of a very questionable character. A committee was appointed to inquire whether there was in existence, in those western counties, any monied institution, monopoly, or other aristocratic establishment, which had been, or might be, perverted by masonic influence to political purposes, or to exert an undue influence upon the public mind. This committee reported that the Holland Land Company, whose territory had extended over nearly seven counties, and to which the people, purchasing their lands, were yet indebted to the amount of six or seven millions of dollars, was such an aristocratical institution. A resolution was thereupon introduced and adopted, of an inquisitorial character, directing the appointment of a committee of six persons to institute an inquiry, whether the agent of the company was a Mason,—whether the sub-agents and clerks of the land office, were Masons,—whether the patronage of the company was bestowed upon masonic newspapers ; and whether the power and influence of the company was wielded in support of the fraternity generally, and in hostility to the Anti-masons. This committee was likewise instructed to co-operate with the people of the other counties on the extensive tract of the company's lands, and, if necessary, to convoke a convention of delegates from those counties, to take further measures in the

premises, should such measures be judged expedient. I am not aware that any serious consequences followed the adoption of these resolutions ; but when we consider the delicacy of the relations between landlord and tenant,—between debtor and creditor,—and the extreme excitability of a large population upon such a subject, it cannot be considered otherwise than remarkable, that an inquiry of such a nature should have been set on foot by men of unquestionable character, worth, and intelligence.

This second state convention of Anti-masons convened at Albany, on the 19th of February, and held a session of three days. It was most respectably attended—forty counties being represented, by upwards of one hundred members. The session was a very laborious one,—the printed record of its proceedings extending to forty large and closely printed pages. The reports, resolutions and addresses of this assembly were exceedingly well devised to preserve and extend the excitement against Freemasonry. Indeed, the highly respectable gentlemen who composed it, must have partaken largely of the excitement themselves ; for more extensive drafts upon the imagination for facts, were probably never made ; and yet, the character of the body which sent them forth to the public, and of the individuals who affixed their names to them, forbids the supposition that they did not religiously believe all they stated. I might adduce many particulars illustrating the truth of what I have just said, as to the character of these proceedings. But a single instance shall suffice. Among the committees for facilitating the labors of the convention, was one whose duty it was to examine the statute books of the state, and ascertain whether they contained any, and, if any, what, legislative enactments, in favor of the Freemasons. This committee reported, with great solemnity, “ that in examining the statute book, they had ascertained that there existed two public acts of the legislature, on the subject,—the



“first, entitled ‘An act to incorporate the Grand Chapter of  
“the state of New-York, passed 31st March, 1818 ;’ and  
“the other, entitled ‘An act to enable masonic lodges to  
“take and hold real estate, for certain purposes therein  
“mentioned, passed April 16, 1825.’—*both of which were  
“extraordinary in their nature, and could have been procur-  
“ed by no less powerful an influence than that which the in-  
“stitution it incorporates has long possessed, and, it is be-  
“lieved, exercises, as well in our legislative halls, as in our  
“courts of justice.”* Then followed a long and grave argu-  
ment, to show the dangers arising from the statutes refer-  
red to, and the enactment of which could not have been pro-  
cured but by the “power” and “influence” of all-powerful  
Masonry. Now it so happens that the writer hereof was a  
humble instrument in obtaining both of those acts, so “ex-  
“traordinary in their nature.” As to the first, the fact was  
simply this : a Grand Treasurer of the Grand Chapter, had  
been a defaulter, having appropriated all the funds in his  
hands, amounting to the sum of five thousand dollars, and  
upwards, to his own use. On being called to an account  
for the default, he offered in payment of the debt, a tract of  
land, in the vicinity of Albany. But the Grand Chapter  
could not purchase and hold real estate, without an act of  
incorporation. It was for the purpose of securing that debt,  
and that alone, that a committee was appointed, of which  
I had the honor to be chairman, to apply for a charter. I  
wrote and presented the memorial and bill, and it was pass-  
ed with but little opposition, and without the least particle  
of masonic influence, other than a simple statement of facts.  
The act of 1825 was passed merely to enable a few gentle-  
men in this city to form a joint stock company, for the erection  
of the noble Gothic edifice which now adorns a section of  
Broadway. I had no personal interest whatever in the ap-  
plication. But happening to be in the Senate chamber,  
writing a report of legislative proceedings, one evening

during the session of 1825, I heard a member of one of the select committees, which were sitting in consultation upon divers applications, remark, on reading the title of this bill,—"Come, let us kill this, and have done with it;" to which proposition his associates assented. Having some knowledge of the merits of the question, and there being no friend of the application present, I immediately rose and stated the simple object of the bill; whereupon the committee, neither of whom were Masons, very readily and cheerfully agreed to report in favor of it, and the bill was passed. Such, sir, and such only, were the objects in view, and the means used, to obtain the passage of those bills. And yet how wonderful the "power" by which they were obtained, and how "extraordinary their nature,"—in the eyes of this very respectable convention! It would be a source of amusement, were the results pertinent to the present investigation, to examine the proceedings of many of these Anti-masonic conventions, and by divesting their statements of the colorings imparted to them by the distempered imaginations of their leading members, exhibit them to the public in the simplicity of truth and innocence. The result would prove many circumstances and transactions which have been the subjects of clamor, to be as unexceptionable as christian man can desire.

The great object of this convention was to devise ways and means for the more effectual and extensive political organization of the Anti masonic party. With this view, another state convention was resolved upon, and it was likewise determined to convene a national convention of Anti-masons, to meet in Philadelphia, in the summer of 1830. It was further resolved, that the character of Morgan deserved an eulogium, and his services a "storied urn." A series of resolutions were thereupon adopted to raise money to build a monument, and likewise to make a suitable provision for the support of Mrs. Morgan, and the education of

her children. Although neither of these last-mentioned resolutions have been carried into effect, yet they probably **HAD THEIR EFFECT.**

On the 3d of March—Mr. Moseley having been appointed to the office of Circuit Judge, in the place of Mr. Throop, elected to the second office of the state,—Gov. Van Buren sent a special message to the Legislature, announcing the resignation, by Mr. M., of the office of Special Counsel, and the appointment of Mr. John C. Spencer in his place. A more acceptable appointment could hardly have been made. In addition to his high professional ability, his untiring industry, perseverance, and zeal, in any cause he undertakes, and his unbending integrity, afforded an ample guaranty for the faithful performance of the duties devolving upon him by this new and important trust. These anticipations were very speedily realized. Mr. Spencer entered forthwith upon the duties of his office, and in the course of the same month was engaged a number of days in pushing ex-parte investigations preparatory to further proceedings, before the grand jury of the county of Monroe, at Rochester. But his labors were impeded at every step by the obstacles thrown in his way by the members of the fraternity, and their able array of counsel, always at hand. Among a great number of witnesses examined on this occasion, was a Mason named Isaac Allen, who refused to answer the Grand Jury whether a carriage stopped before his door on the 13th of September, 1826, and whether a person applied to him on that day for a pair of horses. He objected, on the ground that the answer might criminate himself. The Grand Jury thereupon went into court, and the question whether the witness should be peremptorily required to answer, was argued by able counsel on both sides. The court decided affirmatively. But the witness persisted in his refusal, and was committed to prison for a contempt. At this term, two bills were found for participation in the

conspiracy, viz : against Simeon B. Jewett, an attorney at law, and Burrage Smith. These persons had both been previously indicted, but in a different county.

Gov. Van Buren having accepted the station of Secretary of State, in the cabinet of Gen. Jackson, resigned the office of chief magistrate of New-York, in a few days after sending the special message above mentioned, and the discharge of the executive functions devolved upon Lieutenant Governor Throop. This gentleman, it may be recollected, had originally acquired considerable popularity with the Anti-masons, by pronouncing it "A BLESSED SPIRIT" by which they were actuated. On leaving the chair of the Senate, however, for the audience chamber of the state executive, the now acting Governor addressed the senators at considerable length, and in the course of his remarks, he took occasion to speak somewhat at large upon the subject of Anti-masonry. In regard to the excitement, as he had first known it, the acting Governor declared his opinions to be unchanged. He had himself partaken of that excitement, and was yet in feeling with it, while confined to its original and legitimate object. But he could not join them in their proscription of the whole 'masonic fraternity. He was no Mason, and was opposed to all secret societies; but he did not believe, "that a society which has enrolled " amongst its members persons of all ranks and conditions, " and many distinguished for piety, for the purity of their " lives, and devotion to their country, could be founded on " principles tending to subvert all government, or exact " obligations from its members incompatible with their duty " to their fellow-citizens, their country, and their God." In conclusion, he declared his determination that political Anti-masonry "should meet in him A MILD AND TEMPERATE, " BUT A STEADY AND INFLEXIBLE, OPPONENT." From that day to the present, there has been "a great gulf between" the Anti-masonic party and the Executive. The hostility

has been mutual and ceaseless. Which party will in the end be found most powerful, remains to be seen.

This letter is already sufficiently long ; but there is one other incident in the regular progress of the history, which requires noticing in this place. The crusade against the whole masonic fraternity, whether innocent or guilty, had been waged with such bitterness and effect, and so heavy was the load of popular odium beneath which its members, without distinction, were laboring, that the most respectable and intelligent portion of the craft at the west began now to see the propriety of yielding to the fury of the tempest, by relinquishing the institution, and resigning the charters of their lodges and chapters. Accordingly, during the present month of March, a convention of delegates from the several masonic bodies of Monroe county, was held at Rochester. Forty delegates were present, representing lodges, chapters, and an encampment of Templars. After full consideration, it was determined to make a surrender of the charters of each of the bodies represented, with a view of an ultimate relinquishment of the institution of Masonry altogether. Having come to this resolution, they published an address to the public, containing a declaration of the reasons which had induced the procedure. They wished the public fully to understand, that, in coming to such a decision, they at the same time repelled the idea of a tame submission to the denunciations so prodigally lavished upon them by their opponents. They denied the justice of such denunciations, and invited a free but impartial inquiry into the reasons by which they were actuated in coming to this determination. These reasons were set forth at large in the address—the duty of good citizens to submit to the voice of public opinion, being regarded as the most efficient of the number. They conceded that an utter disregard of public opinion, when once clearly settled and ascertained, was unwise on the part of the citizen, un-

der any form of government,—that, especially under such a government as we have the happiness to enjoy, a reckless opposition to the confirmed public sentiment cannot be defended,—and, that it is not only unwise to treat it with indifference, but, where no violation of principle is involved, to set it at defiance is to be culpably obstinate. Public opinion, they said, beyond all doubt, unequivocally called for the relinquishment of their masonic rights; and under such circumstances, they held that personal gratification must be made to yield to the higher claims arising out of their relations to society. In regard to the abduction and probable murder of Morgan, they declared, most solemnly, “that the transaction had been uniformly condemned by them as an offence obnoxious to the principles of Masonry, to the laws of the country, and to the laws of God.” As it respected the character and principles of Masonry itself, as they had received and understood it, they denied “that there was any thing contained in it immoral in its tendency, or in any wise dangerous to either civil or religious liberty, or opposed to the christian religion.” The address admitted that they had not arrived at this determination to sever all their masonic ties, without a considerable effort; and although there were many others, who, from pride of opinion, or from a repugnance to the adoption of such a course, as it were upon compulsion, would look with displeasure upon the determination to which they had arrived, yet they exhorted all such “to remember that there lay before them a wide field for illustrating, practically, that wholesome rule, cherished by all good men, which enjoined it upon them ‘to restore harmony to society, when interrupted, if possible.’”

An impartial observer, knowing little of the previous history of the controversy, or of the feelings which had been engendered on both sides, would have supposed that in coming to this decision, the Masons had conceded all

that their opponents could have had the conscience to desire. Certainly, if the *professed*, were the *only*, objects of the Anti-masonic party,—if they were really and truly warring against Freemasonry alone, for the single purpose of procuring its annihilation,—they could require nothing further from the Masons of the county of Monroe. And had they manifested a disposition to rest satisfied with this general renunciation on the part of those Masons who had thus publicly surrendered their charters, there can be no doubt that the example would have had a powerful effect upon the fraternity, far and wide in the land. But the fact was otherwise. In the course of the address, its authors had said, that “they did not think the occasion called for an elaborate review, nor, indeed, for a serious refutation of all the absurd imputations and extraordinary charges which had been so industriously arrayed against the fraternity; neither was it proposed to indulge in angry rebukes, and bitter sarcasms against the doubtful motives and unkind passions, which obviously had, and still did, direct the movements of the master spirits of the exclusive party styling themselves Anti-masons. Such a course, although justifiable by the law of retaliation, would not mitigate past evils, and might, perhaps, aggravate anticipated ones, which they were unaffectedly anxious to avert.” In another paragraph, it was asserted by the signers of the address, “that they felt and knew that they were the proscribed and devoted victims of an unholy ostracism.” This language gave mortal offence, and no sooner was it published, than it was seized upon by the Anti-masonic papers, and denounced with as much virulence and acrimony, as though, instead of what it was intended to be, a message of conciliation and peace, it had been a justification of the murder of Morgan, and an order for the death of a hecatomb of additional victims.

There was one unfortunate circumstance connected with this address, affording the Anti-masons a pretext for the course, which, with one accord, they pursued in relation to it. The misfortune through the whole of this controversy has been, that the guilty and the innocent have been confounded together, and the latter have always been made to suffer for the misdeeds of the former. It was so in the present instance; for, although among the forty signers to this address we find the names of several of the ablest professional gentlemen of the west,—men of great purity of character and of high moral and religious worth,—men who would no sooner screen others from the punishment due to crime, than they would be guilty of crime themselves—yet, in the very same list of persons, thus protesting with the utmost solemnity against the outrage committed upon Morgan, were several of those known to have been implicated, at least in a *knowledge* of the conspiracy, before it was consummated, if nothing more. One of these persons had been sent express to New-York, with the purloined manuscripts; another, was the man into whose hands the money voted for “*the western sufferers*,” as they were called by the Grand Chapter, had been placed for distribution. Beyond a doubt, three fourths of the forty were entirely innocent; and they, at that time, supposed their associates to be innocent likewise. But not so thought the Anti-masons, who had been engaged in the investigations previously made, and yet pending. They knew better; and of course the surrender of their charters was denounced as being merely a *make-believe* transaction, and the address pronounced false and hollow.\* In regard to the Rochester Chapter and Encampment, both of which had united in disclaiming all knowledge of, or participation in, the conspiracy, and both of which had denounced the

\* In 1830, Jacob Gould, one of the signers of the renunciation in 1829, attested his *sincerity* by taking his seat in the Grand Chapter, as a member.



act as offensive alike to the laws of God and man, it was now specifically and boldly declared, publicly, and in so many words, "that that chapter and encampment employed and paid a masonic spy, who, as the pretended partner of Miller and Morgan, was nearly two months maturing the conspiracy.\* He reported his progress, regularly, to the encampment; and when the plot was ripe, they sent some of their members to Batavia, and others to Canandaigua, to aid in its consummation. Members of that chapter aided to force their victim into the hack at Canandaigua, and formed a part of his guard through the whole route. When the hearts of some of the persons who had met to inflict masonic vengeance upon Morgan, shrunk from the task, this chapter and encampment were referred to for further instructions. They despatched one of their members to Fort Niagara. \* \* \* \* \* Some of their members were compelled to fly, but they have been cherished and supported by those who remained behind. The outrage was distinctly recognized, by the chapter and encampment, by the fact of their retaining in their bosoms and fellowship, the men who committed it. Members of the chapter and encampment, when called upon to testify in relation to the outrage, have taken false oaths." And these, it was added, are the "*absurd accusations*," which the masons, in their address, had declared unworthy of a "*serious refutation*." Subsequent disclosures, moreover, have shown, that there was too much truth in these charges. But whether true or not, at the time, was immaterial, since there was no resisting such appeals to the popular passions; and the measure which had been resolved upon by the Masons, right and proper in itself, and unexceptionable in its manner, as those who were not Anti-masons would gener-

\* Johns.

ally have supposed, entirely failed in its design. The warfare was prosecuted as vigorously as ever, alike against the just and the unjust—for there was no discrimination among the people, and every mason was believed to stand in all respects upon the same footing.

Having thus failed in the object so sincerely and honestly sought to be obtained by the majority of those who published the address, it is a source of much regret that the effort was made in that quarter, and in the mode in which it was attempted. The scornful manner in which that declaration was received, has ever since been pointed at by the acting masons in other parts of the country, when they have been urged to terminate the contest by a removal of the cause, as an evidence that the cancelling of charters, and the relinquishment of the order, will do no good. It is not *that*, alone, as many of our friends believe, which the opponents of speculative masonry desire: and since what they consider a cruel persecution,—an unconstitutional proscription,—does not cease with the giving up of a lodge, they insist that they may as well hold on upon their empty titles and gilded trappings to the end.

I remain, sir, very truly yours.

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## LETTER XXXIV.

NEW-YORK, March 12, 1832.

SIR,

The exceptions taken to the indictment on which Eli Bruce was tried and convicted at the Ontario Sessions, in August, 1828, having been argued before the Supreme Court, and decided against the defendant, the cause was again brought before the Court of Sessions at its May term, in 1829. Hiram B. Hopkins was called and examined by

the court, in aggravation of punishment. He was deputy sheriff of Niagara county under Bruce, and resided with him in the same house—the jail being under the same roof. He testified, that, some six or eight days before the abduction, Bruce directed him to prepare a cell for the reception of Morgan, whom he said he expected there that night. Accordingly the most secret cell was put in order for that purpose. Witness had previously heard that Morgan was to be taken away from Batavia, for revealing the secrets of Masonry, and to be carried to Niagara. He also understood that Bruce was concerned in the project. Morgan was to come by the way of Lockport, and be lodged in the cell thus prepared. He had been told that Morgan was to be taken to, or by, Niagara, and put on board a ship of war, for his masonic offence. Witness had made inquiries what he should say, if called on as a witness, and Bruce instructed him that he might truly declare he knew nothing about it, because he had never seen Morgan, in any part of the transactions. Heretofore, witness said he had considered himself bound by his masonic obligations not to make any disclosures. But after he began to apprehend that Morgan had been put to death, he had reasoned and reflected much on the nature and character of those obligations, and now considered himself fully absolved from their longer observance. He had attended the installation of the chapter at Lewiston, on the 14th of September, 1826, and learned while there, that Morgan was confined in Fort Niagara.

At the same term of the court, came on the trial of John Whitney and James Gillis—both of whom had been long previously indicted for being concerned in the same conspiracy. Whitney, it will be recollected, had fled to Louisiana, with Burrage Smith, soon after the public attention began to be seriously directed to the circumstances of this singular outrage. Smith died at New-Orleans, and, as in the case of Col. King, Whitney had returned voluntarily,

after the unsuccessful embassy of Messrs. Garlinghouse and Bates, in pursuit of them. Gillis's name, you may recollect, occurs in a former letter, as having been seen among the kidnappers, at Victor, on the night of Morgan's being taken from Prison. He fled to Pennsylvania ; but had been subsequently arrested in Ontario, and held to bail.

The cases having been called, the special counsel declared his intention to have the defendants tried together. Gillis had pleaded to the indictment, at a former term of the court, but was not now present. Mr. Griffin, of counsel for Mr. Whitney, requested that he might be tried alone ; but the special counsel objected, inasmuch as the cases of the defendants were connected, and also on account of convenience to the witnesses, many of whom were from a long distance, and should be allowed to return home with all suitable dispatch. Mr. Sibley, of counsel for Gillis, objected to his being tried during his absence. He had attended two or three terms of the court, to take his trial, but then the prosecution was not ready. Living in another state, it was fairly to be presumed that the notice of trial had not reached him. The special counsel replied that Gillis had never been prepared for trial when the people were ready. At the last term of the court he was ready, but, by some fatality, the people's important witnesses were not in attendance, though they had been subpoenaed, and attachments issued. The witnesses were now attending at great trouble and expense. The court remarked that at the previous term, *the cause of Gillis was announced as being ready for trial the day before it was to have come on ; but two of the witnesses were then discovered to have MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED*, and therefore the people were not ready. It was under such circumstances that the trial had been put off, and the court would not allow another postponement, if the special counsel chose to try the defendant in his absence.

The cause then proceeded—a jury was empanelled without much difficulty, and Mr. Whiting, the District Attorney, opened in behalf of the people. The initiatory testimony, relative to the taking of Morgan from the jail, and forcing him into the carriage at Canandaigua, was the same, as in the histories given in all the preceding trials, and mostly from the same witnesses. In regard to the stopping of Morgan's mouth with a handkerchief, it was now indisputably proved to have been the act of Cheseboro, whose intentions, according to his own deposition, were so very innocent in that matter. The night journey of Loton Lawson to Rochester, on the evening of Morgan's being committed to jail, (September 11, 1826,) was again proved, as formerly, together with his return to Canandaigua, on the morning of the 12th, and the arrival there of John Whitney and Burrage Smith, on the afternoon of that day. The testimony of Ackley, at whose house they stopped in Canandaigua, was on this occasion more full and minute, than on his previous examination. It was now proved by two or more witnesses, that at the time the carriage in which Morgan was taken away, was moving about the street, preparatory to setting off, there was a horse and sulkey standing before the door of Ackley's tavern. Smith was seen in this sulkey a few minutes before the carriage, (having taken up Morgan, and a part of his kidnappers, in the street,) repassed the tavern, on its way to Rochester. The horse and sulkey were driven off at the same time. I am thus particular in noting this fact respecting the sulkey, because it is an important circumstance in identifying the parties. On the trial of Bruce, it may be recollected, it was disclosed that a man, supposed to be Smith, drove up to, and passed, the carriage where it had stopped, about eighty or one hundred rods from Hanford's Landing, and he appeared then to the witness, to belong to the party in the carriage.

This sulkey will again appear in subsequent trials, as the perplexities of these extraordinary transactions are disentangled. Tea was prepared both for Smith and Whitney, at the given hour ; but after waiting some time, Smith not coming in, Whitney took tea by himself. He went out early in the evening, and did not return. Just before the sulkey was driven away, Lawson came in and borrowed a cloak of Ackley. This garment is mentioned because it will be elsewhere referred to.

Hiram Hubbard, so often mentioned as the owner and driver of the carriage from Canandaigua to Hanford's, was again called as a witness. On his direct examination he testified in effect, as on former occasions, mentioning two or three additional facts. There were five persons with him in his carriage, of whom he knew neither. He was not accompanied by a man in a sulkey ; but a man passed him in a sulkey, when two or three miles from Canandaigua, *He stopped at the reservoir in front of Beach's tavern, in Victor, but only for a moment or two ; and this was the only stop he made in Victor.* At Hanford's house a man got out of the carriage, and procured a bottle of liquor.\* They then drove on, and stopped *in a field* near some woods, one or two hundred rods from Hanford's. His cross examination did not materially vary his testimony. He saw no force, in putting a man into his carriage ; heard no complaints on the way ; was told to take his own time in driving ; there were no changes in the number or persons of his passengers on the way ; and when they got out he did not observe that any person was bound. He was engaged to go for this party by Mr. Chauncey H. Coe, one of the stage proprietors at Canandaigua, for whom he frequently did jobs of the kind. He was paid, however, by Cheseboro,

\* Corroborating the testimony respecting the bottle or jug seen by the witness who was watching with the sick man, at Lewiston.

as has already been stated. Coc testified that he engaged the carriage of Hubbard at the request of Cheseboro. He could not tell how Smith and Whitney left Canandaigua on that evening. They did not go in any regular stage.

A Mr. Scrantom testified to the fact of Whitney's being in Canandaigua at the time of the abduction. He said to witness, he had come to engage a journeyman stone-cutter, and witness went with him to a shop, in quest of one. The workmen were not at home. Witness wished to send a letter to Rochester, and Whitney offered to take it, requesting witness to bring it to the tavern in the course of the evening. He wrote his letter, and went by appointment, but could not find him at that place, or elsewhere in the village. Nor was his name upon the books of any of the stage offices. Whitney had seen witness several times before the trial. In the fall previously, defendant had asked witness how it had happened that Hall, (the jailor,) knew of his having been in Canandaigua on the evening of the outrage. Witness replied that he had mentioned the fact, though rather incautiously, and in sport. Whitney then requested him to recollect the application for a stone-cutter, and the conversation.

An important witness was now introduced in the person of Mrs. Hanford, the wife of the innkeeper at the Landing, so called. She testified to the carriage calling early in the morning of the 13th, as heretofore related. Two persons came into the house, of whom Hiram Hubbard was one, and called for something to drink. They took a decanter to the carriage, and when they returned with it, drank something themselves. One of them said—"He was damned glad to get out of jail at first!" They appeared to talk significantly with their eyes. She asked them if they had a prisoner. They replied no, but only a man who had been on the limits. Witness first heard of the abduction of Mor-

gan through a statement in the newspapers ; and the moment she saw the account, she was convinced by the circumstances related, that Morgan must have been in that carriage. She went immediately to her husband with the account, and she had endeavored to call to mind the looks of the two persons who came in at that time. Hubbard, she was sure, was one ; but she was not so confident as to Whitney. The person with Hubbard looked like the defendant, but was not so delicate in his hands, or his complexion. Mrs. Hanford had left that place in April, following the time of which she was speaking—having removed to Pittsburgh, where they had been living two years. When the carriage drove off, the man who came into the house with Hubbard, remained behind, and walked the stoop for some time. There was something in the deportment of the party at the time, that induced her to suppose there was mischief a-foot. Hubbard inquired for oats ; but as there were none in the house, he would not wait to have them brought from the barn, as he said they must drive to Lewiston that day.

A man by the name of Gregory, who lived on the Ridge Road, fifteen miles west of Gaines, testified to the fact of meeting the mysterious carriage, on the 13th of September, 1826. Elihu Matthew was driving it, and there was a man on the box with him, or in the carriage, who very strongly resembled the defendant, John Whitney. Until witness came to attend the present trial, he had supposed the person implicated by this name, was Whitney the distiller. Witness had lived in Rochester, and although he knew not John Whitney by name, yet he had seen the stone-cutter a hundred times ; and it was now strongly impressed upon his mind that the defendant was the man whom he saw on the coach-box with Mather. He also met Burrage Smith with a horse and sulkey, a little in the rear of the carriage. He



had Adams's pet horse ; and witness told him he was driving the animal too hard. Smith replied—"no matter—the concern is able to pay for it."

Levi W. Sibley, a musician from Rochester, who attended the installation at Lewiston, on the 14th of September, proved that both Smith and Whitney were at Lewiston on the morning of the 14th, between 8 and 9 o'clock. Witness went thither in the steam-boat from Rochester. Smith and Whitney returned with them in the boat, on the evening of the installation. Neither of them went up in the boat. In descending the river, the boat stopped at Youngstown, and Smith and Lawson stepped on shore,—asking the captain if there would be time for them to go up to the fort. The reply was in the affirmative, if they would go quick. On returning to the boat, they came from the direction of the fort.

The Rev. Francis H. Cuming, (then of Rochester,) delivered the address at the installation. He saw Smith and Whitney there. He went to Lewiston in the stage, and neither of those persons went with him.

The partner of the defendant (Whitney,) in the stone-cutting business, proved that he left Rochester, in the winter after Morgan's abduction, without apprising him of his intention of so doing. He went away without settling his affairs, or arranging their business ; and without making any provision for the support of his family during his absence. He returned in September, 1828.

A number of witnesses were successively examined respecting the circumstances attending the journey of the closed carriage along the Ridge Road, but they testified to no new fact of consequence. A young man named Aldrich, was next called upon the stand, but objections to his being sworn were raised by the counsel for the defence, upon the same principles on which the testimony of Ed-

ward Giddings had been excluded, on the trial of Eli Bruce, in the preceding August. It was proved, on the one hand, that in a conversation respecting the exclusion of Giddings, Aldrich had repeatedly declared that his own belief was the same. He did not believe in any future punishment, and would not change his principles for the sake of being a witness. On the other hand, the prosecution proved that he had professed correct religious notions until he was 18 years old,—that he was now about 24,—and that he was a universalist, believing in punishment for sin in the present world, but not in the future. The question of his admissibility, under such circumstances, was very ably argued on both sides. Judge Howell afterwards stated, that there were great and increasing difficulties arising upon these questions. The court adhered to the decision in the case of Giddings; but a majority of the bench now doubted whether the case of Aldrich could be brought within that rule. He therefore cheerfully acceded to the opinion of his two associate judges, and would permit the witness to be sworn. The opinion of the court was then called for on the second point, viz: the necessity of a belief in *future* rewards and punishments. Judge Howell, in reply, said that he now concurred in the opinion of Chancellor Walworth, disagreeing with the doctrines heretofore maintained by the Supreme Court. The present Supreme Court, he stated, had also adopted the opinion of Chancellor Walworth. The witness was then sworn.

He lived in Dr. Beach's tavern, in Victor, at the time Morgan was carried off. At about 12 o'clock at night, on the 12th of September, he heard a carriage driving as he thought, up to the house. Being in bed, he rose, and looking out, saw the carriage a little beyond. Witness went down to the bar, as somebody knocked, desiring to come in to obtain something to drink. He had seen two or three

persons standing by the door, and on opening it, both the defendants, James Gillis and John Whitney, entered and called for a bottle of liquor. He gave them a decanter of gin, which they took out of doors,—Gillis offering a three dollar bill in payment, which witness could not change. Gillis then promised to pay it in the morning, when the decanter should be returned. Witness knew Smith and Whitney well, having lived at Rochester, and believed that he saw Smith with Whitney, on the steps. A sulkey was there, and Dr. Beach called up the ostler to bring out a horse to put into it. The party went off, and he saw no more of them. The horse taken for the sulkey, was returned the next day, by the stage from Rochester. This testimony, it will be observed, essentially contradicts Hubbard's evidence on the former trials, and by inference upon the present.

Two witnesses were successively examined, who proved that about the same time of night, a carriage drove up to the house of Enos Gillis,—a brother of James, who lived a few rods farther on their route than Beach's. The curtains of the carriage were down, and it was turned round and driven through the gate, into Mr. Gillis's yard. It remained there some 20 or 30 minutes, and when driven away several persons accompanied it on horseback. One of these witnesses saw James Gillis, the defendant, near the carriage, while standing thus in the back yard. If this was *the* carriage, of which there can be no rational doubt, Hubbard is again explicitly contradicted, upon a point where an honest mistake was impossible. As to Gillis, the defendant, another witness proved his returning, on the following day, mounted on his brother's horse. He said he had been to Rochester, and seven or eight miles beyond; and that he came from Canandaigua, to his brother's house, on the preceding evening, in an extra carriage. If, again, it was

Hubbard's carriage that he came in, of which there is no doubt, then Hubbard was again contradicted. The prosecution was here rested.

The first important witness called by the defence, was Eli Bruce. He testified, that he was first informed that Morgan was coming on the Ridge Road, on the evening of the 13th of September, by Burrage Smith, and another person, now five hundred miles off, whose name he refused to give. About six or eight days before that time, a gentleman called and requested him to proceed to Batavia, to take Morgan away. It was stated that difficulties existed between Morgan and Miller, and that the former would go away willingly. Being sheriff of the county, and not wishing to involve himself in any trouble, he declined the proposal. At about the same time, Orsamus Turner called on him, requesting that an apartment might be fitted up for the reception of Morgan in the jail. He stated that Morgan was expected there that night, on his way to Canada, and had consented cheerfully to go away.\* Witness was asked to go to Wright's tavern, on the Ridge Road, where Morgan was said to be,—he having, as before related, been driven with the carriage, into Wright's barn. Witness inquired if there was any trouble, declaring that he wished not to be involved in any. On his arrival at Wright's, which was about 9 or 10 o'clock, he found Morgan there. They then proceeded to Lewiston, and thence down to Niagara; David Hague, now dead, and Morgan, being the only persons in the carriage from Wright's to Lewiston. He was not at this time acquainted with John Whitney. At or near the gate beyond Wright's, a person passed them on horse-back, whom he knew, but did not give the name. Morgan was not bound, but only a handkerchief placed over his eyes

\* This was on the 8th—at the time of Sawyer's expedition to Batavia, which failed. The project then was, to have carried Morgan direct to Lockport. The Canandaigua movement was a distinct plot.

to prevent his seeing who were with him. On leaving the carriage near the Niagara burying-ground, they proceeded to the ferry near the fort, and crossed over into Canada,—where Morgan was to have been put upon a farm. Morgan did not get out of the boat on the Canada side; and as the Masons there were not ready to receive him,—their arrangements for his reception not being completed,—he was brought back to the American side, and placed in the magazine of the fort, to await the preparations in Canada. When Morgan got out of the carriage, he locked arms with Hague, and another gentleman who joined them at Youngstown.\* Morgan conversed with Hague,—there was no liquor in the carriage,—and he did not seem to be enfeebled. He thought he was among friends. Witness left the fort before daylight, on the morning of the 14th; had never seen Morgan since, and knew not what was done with him. Wright's tavern was three miles from the residence of Bruce at Lockport, at the intersection of a road from the latter place with the Ridge Road. Witness saw several persons whom he knew at Wright's; and at the installation, a stranger was pointed out to him as John Whitney. To a question as to whose charge Morgan had been left in at the magazine, the court would not suffer the witness to reply—upon the ground that no persons but those upon trial, should be implicated. For the same reason, also, the court would not allow the names of those who had crossed in the ferry-boat to be given. The project of taking Morgan away, witness said, was not concerted in the Royal Arch Chapter in Lockport, although it might have been talked over incidentally, in a desultory manner, by the members, but he could not remember specifically the time. The next day after the installation witness rode back from Lewiston to Lockport in a sulkey. He knew not how Smith went to Lockport, nor

\* Col. King.

how the sulkey came there, but understood that it was to be sent home. He supposed it belonged eastwardly, and that the horse attached to it was owned somewhere on the Ridge, but if he had ever known, he had forgotten by whom it was owned, or whither he was to send it. Such is a faithful analysis of the testimony of Eli Bruce, on his first examination as a witness.

Joseph Garlinghouse, called by the prosecutor, testified, that he was commissioned by Governor Clinton to pursue Smith and Whitney, for which purpose he started in August, 1827, and proceeded to Louisville, in Kentucky—from which place they had been gone about three weeks—Smith to New Orleans, and Whitney to St. Louis. His authority to arrest them did not extend beyond Kentucky, and he was obliged to abandon the pursuit. Whitney had since stated to witness that he was at the time engaged in settling some important business affairs with a brother-in-law, who had left his wife; and the knowledge of his arrival in that region, in pursuit, had given his said brother-in-law an opportunity of taking the advantage, by which circumstance, he, [Whitney,] had lost a thousand dollars.

Nicholas G. Cheseboro, called for the defence, swore, that he did not know Whitney in the transactions on the night of the 12th, at Canandaigua, nor did he now recognize him as one of those engaged with them on that occasion. Nor did he recollect having seen Gillis there on that evening.

The cause lasted three days. It was summed up with great ability by the counsel on both sides, and committed to the jury by a brief charge from Judge Howell. The jury retired at 10 o'clock at night, and returned a few minutes before 12, with a verdict of GUILTY against John Whitney, but in regard to the other defendant, Gillis, they could not agree, and were discharged. Whitney was sentenced to an imprisonment in the county jail, of one

year and three months ; and Eli Bruce to the same punishment for two years and four months. " During the whole " term of his imprisonment, he was visited by Freemasons " from every part of the United States, who repaired to " his cell as that of a martyr suffering for the conscientious " discharge of some high and imperative duty. Notwith- " standing the atrocity of his guilt, so clearly established by " the testimony of his deputy and his own evidence, yet " crowds daily thronged around him, testifying their sym- " pathy and their respect. Every comfort that the laws " would allow was provided for him ; and even ladies of " character waited upon him in person, with delicacies pre- " pared by their own hands. The same jail has often con- " tained Freemasons, imprisoned for debt, who were never " cheered by the visits, or solaced by the sympathy, of their " brethren."

Very respectfully yours, &c.

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LETTER XXXV.

NEW-YORK, March 14, 1832.

SIR,

During the same spring a trial took place in the county of Genesee, connected with this subject, which excited some interest in that immediate neighborhood, though scarcely heard of abroad. Those who have only listened to the murmurings of the Anti-masonic excitement at a distance, without actually witnessing, or feeling, the force of the storm, will hardly believe it possible, that at the present day, a case of the kind of which I am about to speak, could have occurred. Ten years hence, if the fact should be left unrecorded, it would not be credited for an instant. The case was this: During the first wild tumult of the ex-

citement, in 1827, in the delirium of their success at the town elections, the project was broached of excluding the name of every member of the masonic body from the jury box. The revised laws of the state gave the Anti-masons the power to do so, in all those towns in which they had been successful,—it being the duty of the supervisor, town clerk, and assessors of the several towns, annually to transmit to the clerks of their counties respectively, an alphabetical list of the names of all persons in the said towns, qualified and of sufficient understanding to serve as jurors. It is likewise by that act made the duty of those officers, annually to return a like list to the county clerks, of all persons, so previously returned as qualified jurors, but who have since died, removed out of the county, or become otherwise disqualified,—and the slips of paper containing the names of persons so returned, are to be taken from the jury box by the county clerk and destroyed. Those returns are transmitted by the town clerks to the clerks of the counties. It was under the provisions of this act, that the officers of the town of Bethany, in the county of Genesee, determined to exercise their brief authority against the Masons; and some of the most pious and respectable citizens of that town were put under the ban of exclusion, and so far disfranchised as to be returned to the county clerk as “disqualified.” The duty of this officer was not discretionary; and the names of the unfencing Masons of Bethany were withdrawn, and the slips whereon they were written, destroyed. It may well be supposed that among a people no less free than jealous of their rights, such an outrage upon their civil privileges would not be patiently or quietly submitted to. A complaint was preferred to the grand jury against the town clerk of Bethany, as the agent in the transaction, and he was indicted, much to their credit, even by an Anti-masonic grand jury. The indictment was tried at the court of



Oyer and Terminer held at Batavia, in April, 1829. "It appeared in evidence that those returned as disqualified jurors were freeholders, and it was admitted by the defendant's counsel, that they were men of understanding, of intelligence and integrity; it was also admitted that they were returned as disqualified because they were Masons. It appeared in evidence that great excitement prevailed in Bethany at that time, and that the exclusion of Mason from juries was frequently talked of, and generally conceded to be correct and proper. It appeared also by one witness that the town clerk was told that if he did not take care of their interest, (the Anti-masons) they would take care of him. The defendant, however, was proved to be a man of integrity and candour, and it was abundantly shown that he acted by the advice and counsel of others, and apparently with a view conscientiously to discharge his trust. The court charged the jury, that although the defendant had grossly mistaken his duty, they did not think there was evidence enough to show that he acted corruptly. They also charged that the defendant could not be convicted on the indictment, because he acted merely as the clerk of the board of inspectors in making the return." The court, therefore, advised the jury to acquit the defendant, which was accordingly done. The foregoing quotation is from Brown's History—a work which is in general too partial to allow much reliance to be placed upon it, in matters of opinion; but in the present case I am free to adopt the author's commentary, when he declares his conviction "that the returning of Masons as disqualified jurors was in violation not only of the letter but of the spirit of the law. In criminal cases, however, the intention constitutes the sole criterion of guilt. Some palliating circumstances were proved on the part of the defendant, and it was, therefore, upon the whole perhaps right that he should have been acquitted;

“ still it was equally proper that he should have been arraigned at the bar of his country for an act sanctioned neither by law nor justice, and which could not be done without trampling upon both.”

The irritation arising from attempts like the foregoing, to oppress the Masons—without reference to their guilt or innocence in the Morgan outrage,—was enough to render the society of any neighborhood sufficiently unpleasant; but the most unhappy consequences resulting from the excitement to the social relations of the people, were connected with the institutions of religion. A very considerable number of the clergy, of different sects, belonged to the masonic institution. Various circumstances had conspired to bring them into the lodges. The Masons, themselves, courted the fellowship of the clergy, to increase their own respectability, by acquiring a more sober and hallowed character than the world were disposed to allow them to possess; for which purpose the Grand Lodge, several years since, authorised their gratuitous admission. Such a regulation in their favor, was naturally flattering to them; their curiosity respecting the supposed mysteries of the order, was as easily excited as with other people; and it was very natural for them to suppose that by joining themselves to the fraternity, they might increase their own usefulness in the cause of their master. But the opponents of the Masons for a long time knew of no distinctions; and the divine in the pulpit, with his deacons at the altar, if they had ever attached themselves to the proscribed order, were as likely to be scorched by the burning zeal directed against the craft, as the humble tyler with his drawn sword at the door of the lodge-room. The fiercest contentions arose in local churches; clergymen were dismissed, or compelled to resign their pastoral charges; fellow-members of churches refused to partake of the sacred elements of the supper at the same table; and, in one instance, a clergyman bearing

the curse of Freemasonry, was personally assaulted in the pulpit. From single churches, the spirit of proscription entered many ecclesiastical bodies, threatening to produce a wider field of spiritual disunion and desolation.

In these measures, I am constrained to say that the Baptists, long ranking among the most unassuming and most tolerant of modern religious sects, took the lead, by the adoption, at the Genesee Consociation held in June, 1828, of a declaratory resolution, "that they would neither license, "ordain, or install, those who sustain any connexion with "the institution of Masonry, or who will not disapprove and "renounce it; nor would they give letters of recommendation in favor of such persons to preach in any of the churches in their connexion." This resolution called forth a reply, in a printed letter of twenty pages, by the Rev. Joseph Emerson, of Connecticut, a member of the same denomination of religionists, which a judicious friend would never have advised him to make public;—for although the writer spoke many truisms, and said sundry sensible things, yet he was clearly ignorant of the actual facts of the case in the western part of New-York. He knew not what a load of guilt had been incurred by a portion of the fraternity in that section of country, which was then pressing the institution to the earth. Nor, had he been ever so well informed, was he the Hercules to remove the burden. His letter, in fact, was such as might have been expected from a fanciful sophomore, just "brought from darkness to light," who had neither searched backwards for the history of the order, nor looked forward to consequences. The effect was obvious. The Consociation put forth a reply which not only shivered his lance into splinters, but, from the mildness of its tone, and the unpretending ability with which it was written, while it left their assailant *hors du combat*, gave them an advantage in the argument in favor of their resolution, which they would not otherwise have possessed.

Other ecclesiastical bodies in the same connexion, followed the example, and among them the Baptist Association, sitting in the same year, as I believe, in the county of Saratoga. A clergyman, by the name of John Lamb, was excluded from the Baptist Church in Waterford, for being a Freemason ; and the difficulties arising upon the subject in that religious community, continued down to the last year, at which time an ecclesiastical council was held to consider of the matter. The publications of the parties lead me to suppose that much ill blood had been excited, and kept in quick circulation, in reference to this subject, during the whole period since the excommunication of Mr. Lamb. In October, 1829, the Baptist Conference for the state of New-York, held a session at Whitesborough, in the county of Oneida. At this meeting Freemasonry was a leading topic of discussion, and a resolution was adopted declaring it to be the duty of every member of a christian church, who was a Freemason, to dissolve his connexion with that institution ; but excusing such members from disclosing masonic secrets, or avowing any opinions as to the character or tendency of Masonry. This resolution gave high dissatisfaction to some of the Baptist associations in the western part of the state ; and the association of Chautauque county, in September last, published a strong address and protest against so lenient a resolution.\* Nothing short of a requirement of unqualified renunciations, in such cases, would satisfy those western churches. In the Baptist Association of this part of the state, the principle of the Whitestown Conference seems to have been extended, and all members of the church, who would not renounce visiting the lodge-room, were excluded from the sacramental rites of the religion they professed. I do not know that in this city there was any occasion to enforce the regulation, but such a principle was adopted, and is yet a rule of action with that denomination.

The Associated Reformed Synod of New-York, at a meeting in Newburgh, in 1830, likewise took up the subject of Freemasonry, and unanimously adopted resolutions expressing their decided disapprobation of the principles and usages of Freemasonry, warning their people against all connexion with the institution, and enjoining it upon all church sessions under their inspection, to adopt effective measures "to remove the contamination from their churches." But as this branch of the christian church is descended from the Scots, their ecclesiastics find a sufficient warrant for this procedure in the annals of their own denomination. So long ago, even, as 1757, the Associate Synod of Scotland passed an act, after great deliberation, requiring the church sessions under their charge to make diligent investigation among their people, to ascertain whether any of them had taken the masonic oaths. All persons who should be found to have received them, were required to renounce; and unless they did so, and expressed contrition for what they had done, they were "to be reputed under scandal, incapable of admission to sealing ordinances, till they answer and give satisfaction as before appointed." The sessions were moreover directed "to proceed unto higher censure, as they shall see cause, in the case of persons whom they may find involved in the said oaths, with special aggravation, as asking or relapsing into the same, in opposition to warnings against doing so."

In regard to the Presbyterian Church, and the cognate persuasion of orthodox Congregationalists, I have seen but a single case of a positive inhibition of the sacramental elements to those professors who should refuse to relinquish their Masonry.\* In the year 1828 or '29, the synod of Ger-

\* It is proper to state, however, that opposition to Masonry did not show itself for the first time in the Presbyterian Church of the United States, after the Morgan outrage. A strong report against the masonic institution was made in 1820, in the synod of the Presbyterian Church, assembled at

esee recommended the withdrawal of their church members from the institution, but did not insist upon such an act, or a formal renunciation. A declaration in the following words was, however, recommended to the consideration of the christian brethren :—" I cheerfully make known for the satisfaction of my christian brethren, that I have discontinued all connexion with the institution of Freemasonry, and intend to remain so disconnected during my life ; and that I recognise no obligations devolving on me in consequence of masonic oaths, as binding me to do or countenance any thing which is not in accordance with the morality of the gospel, and the laws of the land, as commonly understood among my christian brethren." Church difficulties having arisen in the state of Vermont, in 1830, upon this subject, and attempts having been made to exclude adhering Masons from their christian rights and privileges, a large ecclesiastical council of clergymen with their delegates was convened at Danville, in that year. Their proceedings were marked with mildness and wisdom. They refused excluding their masonic brethren from the rites of the church, but advised them to cease attending lodges, although they might not choose formally to renounce ; and they also recommended the adoption of a declaration, after the form of the synod of Genesee. But the series of resolutions adopted by that council, breathe the genuine spirit of christianity—that spirit " which suffereth long, and is kind."

The Rochester Presbytery, however, forming the exception made above, early in the year 1829 published various considerations with a view to remedy present evils, and prevent future ones, which required the " ministers and

Pittsburgh. Long and animated debates arose upon the subject, and its consideration was postponed until another year, when it was renewed. The craft, however, treated the attack with a degree of indifference bordering upon contempt, and the report was never adopted.

"members" of the respective churches under their immediate charge, "absolutely to dissolve their connexion with Freemasonry, and explicitly to signify the same to their christian brethren." One of their reasons for resorting to this measure, is stated to be "the well-known instances of the employment of Freemasonry as an instrument of evil and designing men, in the history of Illuminism." In saying this, they spoke without credible authority, as I have already shown in my eighth letter. But this error is not very material; while it is but justice to remark, that the general tone and scope of the address published by the Rochester Presbytery, was worthy of much praise. In one of their propositions they distinctly state, that while "they wish their christian brethren to withdraw from the institution, they by no means give their countenance to those methods of renouncing Freemasonry that involved a breach of fidelity, or a violation of oaths, or other pledges of confidence, by which masonic brethren may have bound themselves." They also enjoined it upon their churches to make no hasty decisions, or rash excommunications; and indeed the whole address was tempered by that mild and benignant spirit which is every where breathed in the tolerant doctrines of christianity.

But to illustrate still further, the extent, and the depth of feeling, that came at last to prevail among the religious community at the west upon this subject, I can state, that large public meetings of professors of religion of different denominations, were repeatedly held, for the purpose of consulting upon the moral qualities and tendency of Masonry, and the measures proper and expedient to be adopted in relation to it. I have now before me the printed proceedings of a large united meeting of this description, held in the county of Oneida, on the 14th of January, 1830, the measures adopted at which were of the most decisive character. Several members rose in the meeting, denouncing the

institution, and then and there renouncing it. Resolutions were adopted pronouncing it to be the duty of all professors of religion to withdraw, and declaring that unless they did so, it would be the duty of christian professors to withdraw the hand of fellowship from them. They likewise resolved that the masonic institution was an obstacle to the spread of the gospel, and that its entire overthrow must precede the universal emancipation of the world from error and sin. And finally, "a special day of solemn *fasting*, *humiliation*, and *prayer*, on account of the existence of *"Masonry in the church, and for the guidance and direction of Almighty God, upon the manner in which it is to be treated,"* was appointed and set apart.

But notwithstanding the flow of pure christian feeling which characterizes the most of their proceedings,—and I have only referred to a few instances, as specimens of many more,—I cannot persuade myself but that they were all entirely wrong in principle. As to the worldly government of a church, its members, or the governing ecclesiastical power, have an undoubted right to prescribe terms, the same as in other voluntary compacts. So, also, as to the leading doctrines of faith and practice. But in regard to the heart and the conscience, every man must judge and act for himself. Nor can any requirements be exacted, going beyond those prescribed by the Great Head of the Church himself. Theology, however, does not properly appertain to this discussion,—and I cheerfully dismiss this branch of my subject, with the expression of my hearty desire, that there may hereafter be found too much wisdom on all sides to allow any section of the christian church ever again to be disturbed by such a question.

I am very respectfully, yours.



## LETTER XXXVI.

NEW-YORK, March 16, 1832.

SIR,

Under the conduct of Mr. Spencer, great activity was manifested in the legal investigations of the conspiracy during the summer of 1829. In the county of Genesee, all efforts to procure indictments for the conspiracy and abduction, had hitherto proved unavailing, although, as we have already seen, there had been indictments, trials, and convictions for the outrages upon Miller. The special counsel was however determined not again to be foiled in his attempts to discover the persons in Genesee, who had been engaged in the conspiracy against Morgan. At the June term of the General Sessions, therefore, Eli Bruce was brought, on a *habeas corpus*, from the jail of Ontario, to testify before the grand jury of Genesee. One of the standing counsel of the persons indicted in other counties, was in attendance, however, and while Bruce was on his way to the jury room, this gentleman placed a letter in his hands. The consequence was, that on being brought before the grand jury, he positively refused to be sworn as a witness, and persisted in his refusal. A large body of Masons had collected on the occasion, and Bruce was highly complimented for his constancy and fidelity to the craft. But numerous other witnesses were examined, and indictments were found against William R. Thompson, the sheriff, Nathan Follett, Blanchard Powers, and William Seaver,—all of whom were respectable citizens.

In July, a Court of Oyer and Terminer was held in Niagara county, at which term it was intended to bring on the

trial of the indictments in that county. But the cases were all removed by the defendants, by certiorari, into the Supreme Court. The examinations were resumed before the grand jury, but no additional facts seem to have been elicited. James Mather was examined as a witness, but his conduct was such as to subject him to an admonition from the court. His answers were so equivocal and unsatisfactory, however, that nothing could be extracted from him.

The continued absence of witnesses, was a perpetual cause of embarrassment to the public prosecutor; and strong efforts were made between the July and August terms of the courts, to discover and arrest some of those who had been secreted. It was ascertained that one important witness, by the name of Harris, was in Montgomery county. A warrant for his apprehension was taken out, and an officer despatched for him with all possible secrecy. He was there on the arrival of the officer, but before a deputation could be obtained from the sheriff of Montgomery, a signal was "given, sent, or handed," and the witness suddenly fled. Hannah Farnsworth was another important witness in the case of Solomon C. Wright, who had been indicted for perjury committed on the trial of Bruce. She long had baffled all attempts to arrest her; but being at length taken, was admitted to bail, and on a promise in open court to appear and testify, she was released. She fled, and her recognizance was forfeited. Nor could she afterwards be found.

Another important absconding witness was Orson Parkhurst. He resided at Rochester, with Ezra Platt, in September, 1826, when Morgan was brought to the village, just at day-light, and was called up by Platt, to drive his carriage to Hanford's Landing, where he received Morgan and his abductors from Hubbard's carriage. Parkhurst then drove on with Morgan sixteen miles, to Isaac Allen's, where fresh horses were in readiness. Immediately after

the transaction, he absented himself, and had been working in different and distant places, until, in the summer of 1829, it was ascertained that he was residing in a sequestered place in New Hampshire.

“ In August, 1829, a court of Oyer and Terminer was held for Monroe county ; and, as this was the last court at which a grand jury would be assembled in that county, before the statute of limitations would attach upon prosecutions for the conspiracy and kidnapping, preparations were made for a more thorough investigation than had yet been had.” Among others, an agent was employed to go in pursuit of Parkhurst. He was found, and brought back to within about forty miles of Rochester, where he mysteriously escaped from the canal boat, in the night, and was not afterwards heard of. Having understood that by subsequent disclosures it had been ascertained that his escape was owing to the fortitude, the energy, and the affection of a woman, I wrote to Mr. Weed, the gentleman who was employed as the agent in his discovery and arrest, and who had him in charge at the time, for the particulars ; and as the incident partakes somewhat of the romantic, I beg leave to enclose you the annexed extract from the reply to my communication:—

“ Obtaining a requisition from acting governor Throop, for the apprehension of Parkhurst, as a fugitive from justice, I found and apprehended him in the town of Weathersfield, Vt. The persons implicated, knowing that I was in pursuit of some of their associates, stationed men at Albany to watch the stages and steam boats. As we were stepping into the stage to go west from Albany, Parkhurst was seen by Elihu Mather, who drove the Morgan carriage from Gaines to Ridgeway. He immediately communicated the fact to Mrs PLATT, who was then residing at Albany. In the absence of her husband, whose indictment and conviction were sure to follow Parkhurst's testimony, Mrs P. instantly disguised her sex, by assuming men's apparel, obtained a sulkey, which she drove with great speed to Schenectady, where she overtook the stage, and kept along in company with us to Utica,—without, however, getting an opportunity of making herself known to Parkhurst.

"At Utica, we took a canal boat, and Mrs. P. kept on in the stage to Weeds-Port, where she anticipated, and awaited our arrival. We reached there early in the evening, and Mrs. P. came on board. In the course of the evening she got an opportunity to make herself known to Parkhurst, who readily consented to make an effort to escape. The project was facilitated by the captain, (who was a Mason, and an acquaintance of Platt's;) and sending the helmsman to bed, the captain took that post himself. At about one o'clock, while I, who thought all danger and possibility of escape was over, had fallen to sleep, the stern of the boat was laid ashore, and the lady, with my false witness, took the tow path, in the depth of the Montezuma marshes, and made a successful retreat.

"Parkhurst, before meeting with Mrs. Platt, had made up his mind to go to Rochester, and reveal all he knew, and he could only have been induced to escape, by just such an appeal as was made to him. He had been an inmate of Platt's family nearly two years, during which time he had had a severe fit of sickness, and received the kindest attentions from Mrs. Platt, of whose estimable character all who know her bear cheerful testimony. The welfare of her family, and the liberty of her husband, were in the hands of Parkhurst. She had treated him when sick, with the tenderness of a mother, and he would have been less than human, to have been deaf to such an appeal. It was not until the last summer, that I ascertained in what manner Parkhurst escaped. The devotedness of the action, on the part of an affectionate wife and mother, entirely soothed the feelings of mortification occasioned by the escape of my fugitive."

It was believed that had the attendance of Parkhurst been secured, he would have identified several persons in Rochester, as having participated in the conspiracy and abduction. The only person indicted at this term, however, was the Rev. Francis H. Cuming, then a settled clergyman in that place. He has since left the state. The indictment against Simeon B. Jewett, was removed to the Supreme Court at this term, by the defendant. At the October term of that tribunal, Jewett made a motion to quash the indictment, on the ground that partiality had been exercised by town officers, in selecting grand jurors from the ranks of the Anti-masons, to the exclusion of the masonic fraternity, and also that some of the members of the grand jury had expressed opinions upon the question of his innocence. The motion was denied.

In September further investigations were made before a grand jury of Niagara, and indictments were found against Henry Maxwell and Norman Shepherd. "An attachment was issued against John W. Beals, who had been duly subpoenaed to attend this court as a witness, and had refused to attend. He was a respectable citizen, and a Mason of high grade. He was arrested on the attachment, and gave bail to appear and answer for his contempt. But he did not appear, and his bonds were forfeited."

But, notwithstanding the legal proceedings of the summer of 1829, to which I have thus rapidly adverted, the public mind seemed to have become more tranquilized, and less clamor was heard at a distance upon the subject of Anti-masonry. The character of the special counsel who had been clothed with the whole power of the state to bring to punishment the offenders, was such as to deserve, if not to command, the entire confidence of the people; and it was hoped, that a consciousness that all which the law would allow, and the zeal and ability of an indefatigable man could accomplish, would have entirely allayed the excitement, and stripped it, in a measure, of its political character. But as the November elections approached, the new party again took the field with renewed activity, and the result showed that their principles of action had struck deeper root, and spread wider their branches. The elections, it is true, were of less interest than those of the preceding year, which involved the choice of a governor, members of congress, and a president for the Union. But the Anti-masons nevertheless turned out to a man; marched up to the polls with as much solemnity as the Covenanters in Scotland whilom went to battle;—demanding "where is Morgan?" and voting down all parties. They carried fourteen of our western counties at this election, and one in the eastern part of the state. In many other counties where

the Anti-masons were unsuccessful, they showed an augmented number of votes ; and the total number polled upon that question, was computed at about 60,000. No evidence of "dying away," was read in that result.

Very respectfully, &c.

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LETTER XXXVII.

NEW-YORK, March 18, 1832.

SIR,

The next in the series of trials of which I have given an abstract, is that of Elihu Mather, who was indicted for participating in Morgan's abduction, being accused of driving the carriage in which he was conveyed, through the county of Orleans, towards Niagara ; and the main question in which seemed to be, whether or not he knew the fact, that Morgan was in it, and carried forcibly without his consent.

This case was brought to trial before Judge Gardiner, at the Circuit Court held in the county of Orleans, in November, 1829. So much difficulty was experienced in empannelling a jury, and so much contrariety of testimony was taken before them, that the trial of the cause lasted ten days.

The first questions arose in the empannelling of the jury to try the accused. Robert Anderson was called and challenged for principal cause, on the ground that the defendant and juror were both members of the masonic fraternity. This was demurred to, and the demurrer sustained by the judge, on the ground that as nothing appeared by the pleadings as to the nature and objects of that association, it formed no legal qualification, and consequently was not the subject of challenge for *principal cause*.

Anderson was then challenged for favor. Dr. Joseph K. Brown, on the part of the people, testified, that there was a

point in an obligation he took like this—"that I will aid and assist a companion Royal Arch Mason whenever I shall see him engaged in any difficulty, so far as to extricate him from the same, whether right or wrong," and that he knew of no exception or qualification. Daniel Pratt and Archibald L. Daniels were also sworn, to prove a particular intimacy between the accused and the proposed juror; but nothing on this head was shewn beyond the ordinary courtesies of friendship. Robert Anderson was then sworn on the part of the defendant, and testified, that there was a clause in the Royal Arch Mason's oath, which, without being qualified, was something to the effect mentioned by Dr. Brown. That qualification he stated to be, that when he saw a Royal Arch Mason in a quarrel with another, he was to try to get him away, and give him a particular sign, whether right or wrong in that quarrel,—but that all obligations, lectures, and charges, expressly required him to obey the laws. The friendship between Masons, he said, was similar to that which exists among members of churches and societies, liable to be severed by personal or political considerations. Witness admitted, on cross-examination, that he might have said at first that he did not believe Morgan to have been carried off *against his will*—he then thought it might possibly be a trick between Miller and Morgan,—and had participated in the feelings of Masons generally, on the subject. Had no particular opinion whether Morgan was, or was not, in the carriage when it arrived at Gaines, but was impressed with the idea that, if so, Mather must have known it.

Isaac W. Averil, Milton W. Hopkins, and Orson Nicholson were also adduced by the counsel for the people. Nothing of interest was elicited from the former witness, and the main point bearing upon the case testified to by the two latter, (in which they concurred,) was, that the inculcation to be a good citizen, and obey the laws, was contained in the

charge, and not in the oath,—but that there was no obligation to protect or commit crime.

The judge instructed the triers, that if in their opinion it was proved, contrary to the testimony of Anderson, that the obligations were given without being accompanied *at the time* by the explanation he had given, it should exclude him as a juror. Even then, if they found evidence of attachment or prepossession between them, sufficient to create a bias which would not readily yield to testimony, it would be their duty to pronounce him unqualified. The triers determined that Robert Anderson did not stand indifferent.

John Dolly was also called as a juror, and challenged for principal cause, which was overruled by the judge, and he was then challenged for favor by the counsel for the people. The proposed juror testified on this issue, that he was a mason of eight or nine degrees, and acquainted masonically with the defendant.

Joseph K. Brown again testified as to the nature and extent of masonic obligations, substantially as he did in the case of Anderson.

Orson Nicholson and Wm. Ruggles were also called, but the results of their examination did not seem essentially to vary the bearing of the point in issue from what it was in Anderson's case. The triers however decided that John Dolly did not stand indifferent.

Stephen Martin, Jr., was challenged for principal cause by the defendant, on the ground that he had formed and expressed an opinion of his guilt, and called Eldridge Farwell, who testified that he had heard Martin say, that he believed the masonic institution to be corrupt,—that Morgan had been carried away by Masons alone, along the Ridge Road, in a carriage driven by Elihu Mather,—that he knew Morgan was in it, and he (witness) believed him to be guilty. The public prosecutor then offered the challenged juror to explain, who testified that he had no fixed



opinions of the prisoner's guilt, other than such as were founded on printed statements in the papers and reports in conversation. If the evidence supports the circumstances he has heard, then he has a fixed belief of the guilt of the defendant, otherwise not, and in such case his present belief would be removed. Upon this evidence the judge decided that the challenge for principal cause was sustained, and the juror was set aside.

Samuel Clark, another juror, was called, and a principal challenge for cause was made to him by defendant's counsel. Upon being sworn as a witness, he testified that he had formed an opinion, but had not expressed it. The court thereupon decided that the challenge was not sustained. He was then challenged to the favor by defendant's counsel, and being again sworn, testified that he had formed an opinion that the defendant was guilty. On his cross-examination, he stated that his opinion was formed in consequence of reports, and of what he had read. The judge charged the triers that if they believed the juror had now a fixed opinion which it would require testimony to remove, he was disqualified, whether that opinion was founded on rumor alone, or on rumor and printed statements. The triers decided that the juror was not indifferent.

Carlos C. Ashley, a tales-man, (the panel being exhausted,) was returned by the sheriff, and testified that he had not formed or expressed any opinion of the guilt or innocence of the defendant. On his further examination, he stated that he had been for eighteen months a partner with James Mather, the defendant's brother, in the tanning business: that James Mather was rich, and furnished the capital, and that he, witness, was poor, and furnished the labor for carrying it on; that he had been in the employ of James Mather three months before the partnership commenced, and that, during all that time, the subject of Morgan's abduction had never been the subject of conversation,

although he had read the newspaper reports of the trials of Bruce and Whitney. Had formed no fixed opinion of the guilt or innocence of the defendant, and thinks he can hear the testimony and give it its due weight, without any struggle in his own mind. The judge decided that the juror was indifferent. He was accordingly sworn, and the panel being full, the trial proceeded.

Mary W. Hall, Israel R. Hall, Wyllys Turner, and Hiram Hubbard were sworn; but their testimony relating wholly to the abduction of Morgan from Canandaigua, and to that part of his conveyance westward, which was preceding the place or time in which the defendant's alledged participation in it commenced, it is not necessary here to recapitulate it.

Benjamin Wright, Esq., of Adams, in the county of Jefferson, testified, that in the winter of 1828, the defendant was at his (witness') office in Adams, when a conversation took place between them, in which he asked defendant about the fate of Morgan. Defendant said he had no doubt but that Morgan was dead, and went into a detail and mentioned several individuals, among whom was one of the name of Bruce. He said they were prosecuted so severely, that unless the lodges and chapters should do something for them, they and their families must probably suffer, and asked witness about the state of the funds of the lodge and chapter in Adams. Witness asked defendant what could induce men of such standing as those he named, to engage in the transaction of carrying off Morgan. Defendant's reply was, in substance, that it was done probably without much reflection. In the course of the conversation, the defendant said he was called upon, while he was in or about a tan-yard, by his (defendant's) brother, or in a tan-yard of his brother, and at the time when he was so called upon, he had no knowledge of Morgan's being in the carriage. Witness was a Freemason, and knew Mather as such. Being

examined again, witness testified that defendant said that had he known that Morgan was in the carriage when he was called on to drive it, or what this business would lead to, or something of that kind, he should have had nothing to do with it, or he should not have driven the carriage.

Sarah Wilder testified to the identity of the carriage in which Morgan is supposed to have been conveyed, whilst it stopped at Clarkson.

Silas D. Luce, a stage driver between Oak Orchard and Clarkson, testified that in going east, and within one and a half miles from Gaines' corners, he saw a carriage coming west, and the defendant just behind it, riding one horse, and leading another, very fast. That the defendant soon overtook the carriage which stopped, whereupon the horses were taken out, and those brought by Mather harnessed in. At this point of time witness passed the carriage. When the harnessing was completed, the defendant got on the box and drove the carriage on. Witness looked back and saw the man who had been driving coming towards Gaines with the horses which had just been taken from the carriage. Knew Elihu Mather well.

Israel Murdock testified, that on 13th September, 1826, about noon, he was standing at the door of Joseph L. Perry, at Ridgeway, about nine miles west of Gaines, and saw a carriage coming up and a person driving whom he thought to be the defendant. The next day he saw the same carriage coming back from the west, and Elihu Mather driving it. He then distinctly recognized him.

Six respectable and unimpeachable witnesses here successively testified to the fact of having seen Mather, at different places on that day, driving the carriage westwardly. They all knew Mather, and one of them saw him on the following day, returning with the carriage.

Wm. P. Daniels being sworn, was asked whether on the evening of 13th of September, 1826, he, witness, was at

the house of Solomon C. Wright, in Newfane. Witness refused to answer, on the ground that it might criminate himself. It was admitted that the witness was not under prosecution, and the public prosecutor insisted that as the time fixed by the statute of limitations in such cases had elapsed, he was bound to answer. To this it was replied, that it was now generally believed that Morgan was murdered; and if so, the witness might be indicted as an accessory before the fact, which did not come within the statute. The court sustained the refusal. He subsequently testified that Wright kept a tavern at Newfane, on the Ridge Road, about three miles northwesterly from Lockport, and seven or eight miles east from Mollineaux's tavern in Cambria,—that he does not know that defendant was at Wright's on the evening referred to,—that Eli Bruce was at Wright's on that evening,—thinks that Jeremiah Brown was there at the same time,—and supposed that Brown and Bruce left there in a carriage about eight or nine o'clock in the evening. Some further questions were put, which the witness declined answering, and which the court decided he was not bound to answer.

Daniels, the last mentioned witness, was a Mason, and came into court accompanied by counsel to whom he resorted on every difficult occasion, for instructions whether he should answer or not. He not only several times declined answering questions, but in one instance persisted in his refusal, until the order for his commitment was nearly completed, when he relented. At one time, he referred to a written memorandum, and read his answer to the question pressed upon him; and from inquiry it was ascertained that the answer had been written by his counsel!

Robert Mollineaux testified to the fact of being called up in the night, and furnishing horses, as on former trials, and Corydon Fox again repeated his story of the night trip from Lewiston down to the fort, without variation. Mr.

Perry likewise again testified to the fact of having witnessed the exchange of passengers from one carriage to another, in the back street of Lewiston. One of the persons taken out seemed to have a handkerchief bound about his head, and had not the use of his feet.

David Maxwell kept the turnpike gate on the Ridge Road about six miles east of Mollineaux's and near to Solomon C. Wright's. On 13th September, between ten and eleven o'clock at night, a two horse carriage passed the gate to the west. The toll was paid by Jeremiah Brown, whom he saw returning the next morning in the same carriage, apparently asleep.

Here the testimony on the part of the prosecution closed.

The defendant called Israel R. Hall, relative to the transactions at Canandaigua; and also Corydon Fox and Frederick B. Moon to describe the premises of Ebenezer Perry, and how far it was practicable for him to have seen all he related from the positions he described.

The defendant's counsel then called five witnesses who testified that the character of the defendant, up to the time of this transaction, had been always that of a good citizen, peaceable, mild and orderly, and that he had been distinguished for the sobriety and rectitude of his conduct.

The testimony being closed, the counsel summed up, and the judge having delivered a charge to the jury, in the course of which he instructed them, that if the jury were satisfied, upon a review of the testimony in relation to the removal of Morgan from the goal in Canandaigua, (as they probably would be,) that a design had been formed by Lawson, Cheseboro and others, to forcibly abduct or kidnap Morgan, then the inquiry would remain, was the defendant a party to that agreement? The judge also adverted to the confidential relation of the circumstances of the abduction of Morgan, to Benjamin Wright, Esq., in which he said that if he had known that Morgan was in

the carriage, he should never have driven it, as establishing the fact, that, however, guilty Mather might be in aiding the execution of the conspiracy, he was not a party to it originally. The judge also charged the jury, (on a suggestion made by the special counsel,) "that although they were satisfied that Mather assisted in carrying the conspiracy into execution after its formation, that fact would not, in the opinion of the court, constitute him a party."

The jury, after retiring from the bar, returned with a verdict of Not Guilty. Messrs. Spencer, A. H. Tracy and J. B. Coles for the people. Messrs. Mathews, Adams and Barnard for the defendant.

A motion was made to the Supreme Court for a new trial in this case, by the counsel for the people, upon a statement of evidence agreed to by the parties. It was argued at the January term of the court, and the case decided at the May term following, (1830,) of which a report may be found in IV. Wendell, 229. Thirteen points of exception were made by the counsel for the people; but the judgment of the circuit judge was sustained by the Supreme Court on all the points but one, and that one they did not deem to be such as could have influenced the jury in rendering the verdict of not guilty. The motion for a new trial was therefore refused. A very able and elaborate opinion of the court was delivered by Judge Marcy, but as my object is not the elucidation of points of law but the facts in controversy, I have confined myself to those parts only of the voluminous record that have a direct relation to my purpose.

I have the honor, &c.

## LETTER XXXVIII.

NEW-YORK, March 20, 1832.

SIR,

The Legislature of 1830, commenced its session on the 5th of January. In his opening message to that body, the acting Governor referred to the Anti-masonic excitement in the following terms :—" Although in some sections of the state an unusual excitement has prevailed, I am happy to have it in my power to say, that it has not originated in a desire to change our constitution, or in a distrust of the integrity of our laws ; but in an honest zeal, overflowing its proper boundaries, misdirected in its efforts, and carrying into public affairs matters properly belonging to social discipline. Such feelings cannot long exist beyond the limits of their proper sphere of action ; and it is a source of gratification, that in this instance they give evidence of speedily subsiding into their natural and healthful channel." In framing this paragraph, his excellency must certainly have been guided rather by his wishes, than by the actual facts, as disclosed in the returns. Twenty-eight members of the legislature, elected solely by the "excitement," and an increase of nearly thirty thousand votes from the preceding year, spoke a very different language.

On the 27th of January, the Executive transmitted to both houses of the legislature, the report of the special counsel, giving an account of his proceedings, and the result of his investigations, since his appointment to execute the duties of commissioner. This report was an able document, though much of it necessarily consisted of a repetition, in substance, of the history of the outrage, and of the facts

brought to light on the preceding trials. In addition to the recapitulation of the earlier portion of the history, it contained a detail of the material facts of the evidence which had been disclosed to successive grand juries, and the testimony, *in extenso*, of several of the most important witnesses who had at different times been examined. The materials were so arranged as to furnish an intelligible view of the whole subject, down to that period, with the omission only of particulars the publication of which might have the effect of defeating the ends of justice.

The legislature was summarily informed by this report, of all the legal proceedings past or pending, under the charge of the special counsel. The period, within which prosecutions for the Morgan outrages could be legally instituted, had now expired, and no new indictments could be found. Up to the last moment, however, the special counsel had attended all the courts in the several counties, where indictments could be procured, and examined witnesses before the respective grand juries. New indictments had also been found in several instances where the preceding ones were ascertained to be defective. There were at the time of making this report, untried indictments pending in the county of Niagara, against twelve persons ; in the county of Genesee, four ; and two in each of the counties of Ontario and Monroe. But two trials had taken place during the preceding year, viz : those of Whitney and Gillis, and of Elihu Mather. The Court of Oyer and Terminer, which had been appointed in the preceding April, for Niagara County, had failed, in consequence of the indisposition of the circuit judge. In July a special Court of Oyer and Terminer had been held in that county, at which the indictments, then pending there, were removed by the defendants, by certiorari, into the Supreme Court. The Circuit Court appointed for that county in November, had failed, in consequence of the prolonged sitting of the court on the trial of Mather, in the



county of Orleans ;—so that the indictments in Niagara could not be brought to trial. In the month of August, a Circuit and a Court of Oyer and Terminer, had been held in the county of Monroe, at which the only indictment then pending in that county, was removed into the Supreme Court by the defendant. At the October term of that court, a special motion by the defendant was argued and denied ; and at the term of the same court, for January, not closed when the report was written, the defendant interposed a special plea in abatement. These proceedings had prevented the joining issue upon the innocence or guilt of the defendant.

In regard to the difficulties encountered in pursuing these investigations, the commissioner made several statements of high importance. All but two of the persons the most actively engaged in the conspiracy, as far as the facts had been ascertained, were Masons of the Royal Arch degree. Some of the witnesses had escaped beyond the reach of legal process ; others had peremptorily refused to testify, being in the situation which it was supposed placed them beyond the legal means of coercion.

“ From the members of the masonic fraternity, who still adhered to it, and who considered themselves included in the indiscriminate warfare of which an account has been given, the special counsel said no assistance whatever had been received, although the occasions demanding it had been frequent. With but few exceptions, witnesses who still belonged to the institution, had been reluctant in their attendance at court, and apparently indisposed to testify. Difficulties which never occurred in any other prosecution, had been met at every step. Witnesses had been secreted ; they had been sent off into Canada, and into different states of the Union. They had been apprised of process being issued to compel their attendance, and had been thereby enabled to evade its service. In one instance, after a party implicated had been arrested and brought into this state, he was decoyed from the custody of the individual having him in charge, and finally escaped. These occurrences, the commissioner said, had been so numerous and various, as to forbid the belief that they were the result of individual effort alone, and they had evinced the concert of so many agents, as to indi-

cate an extensive combination to screen from punishment those charged with a participation in the offences upon William Morgan. No evidence, however, had come to the knowledge of the special counsel, to justify the belief that the members of the masonic institution *generally*, had been engaged in any such combination."

The report having been read, was referred, in the Senate, to the committee on the judiciary. On the motion of Mr. Maynard that it be printed, some opposition was manifested. Mr. Benton, of Herkimer, and Mr. Hubbard, of Chenango, spoke in opposition to the motion. The former gentleman first desired to have the opinion of the committee to whom it had been referred, on the question of printing. Mr. Hubbard contended that the special counsel in framing the report, had travelled out of the record—beyond the line of duty. He said the author might as well have sent a political pamphlet to the legislature, as such a document. He was not required to give his opinion of the merits or demerits of any particular society. Mr. Maynard replied that if the report ought not to be printed in furtherance of the views of one political party, certainly the printing should not be denied to aid another. There was great anxiety among the people to see the document, and if the printing were refused, it would only serve to kindle anew, and increase, the excitement so much deplored. The motion prevailed.

It was stated by the special counsel, in his report, that, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, he had deemed it a solemn duty to object to the empannelling of any Royal Arch Masons as jurors upon the trial of indictments against their brethren; and, on the trial of Mather, the objection was sustained in the two instances in which challenges on that ground had been made. In the trial of those challenges, testimony had been taken at great length, as to the nature of the masonic institution, and of the obligations imposed upon its members. But entertaining doubts whether this testimony fell within that description of evidence which

the legislature seemed to have intended should be reported, it had been omitted by the special counsel. In consequence of this statement, Mr. Maynard, on the 28th of January, offered a resolution calling upon the special counsel for a full report of all the testimony given on the before mentioned trial, on the challenges of jurors to favor, in consequence of their being members of the masonic fraternity, and who were pronounced by the triers not to be indifferent: and also requiring him to state the points or questions of law, decided or discussed on said challenges, or affecting the question of the indifferency of the said jurors. After some further debate, an amendment, directing the judge who had held the court, to make a report of the case, instead of the special counsel, prevailed, and in that shape the resolution was adopted.

Another Anti-masonic state convention was held in Albany, commencing its sittings on the 28th of February. Its objects were manifold. About one hundred delegates appeared, notwithstanding the inclemency of the season. Delegates to the National Convention, which was to assemble in Philadelphia during the ensuing summer, were appointed, and arrangements made for the holding of another State Convention, with immediate reference to the next state election, then nearly nine months distant. A memorial was adopted, and ordered to be presented to the Legislature, praying for the appointment of a committee, to inquire whether the Grand Chapter of the state of New-York had interfered in the administration of justice, or in any manner aided, countenanced, or protected the violations of our laws, or departed from the objects of its incorporation, or perverted the purposes of its creation. As a reason for such an investigation, the memorial referred to the charges publicly and repeatedly made, that money had been appropriated from the funds of the said Grand Chapter, for aiding in the escape of some of the persons accused

of participation in the Morgan outrage, and for the defence and support of others of the conspirators. This memorial was presented on the 6th of March, and after an ineffectual attempt on the part of its friends to refer it to a select committee, empowered to send for persons and papers, it was ordered to lie on the table. It was called up, however, on the 8th; but its opponents adroitly proposed so to amend, as to send the whole subject to the Attorney General, requiring that officer to examine and report, whether, in his opinion, the Grand Chapter had misused its privileges, and if so, requiring him to file a *quo warranto* before the proper court, to obtain a judgment of forfeiture. An animated debate ensued, but the amendment prevailed by a vote of 75 to 30. This movement was merely a device to get rid of the subject as quietly as possible; and it succeeded.

On the 16th of April, the Attorney General reported, that an information in the nature of a *quo warranto* against a corporation, could only be exhibited upon leave granted by the Supreme Court, or some one of its justices; and to obtain leave, either direct or circumstantial evidence must be given of the truth of the matter upon which the information is founded. He had addressed a letter, on the 10th of March, to Gen. Bellinger, President of the Convention, whose name was at the head of the memorial, requesting him to furnish an affidavit of such facts and circumstances as would establish the truth of the charges against the Grand Chapter. On the 16th of that month he received a reply, stating, in substance, that the writer knew nothing of the facts, save what he had derived from the newspapers, reports, &c. He referred to certain persons, however, who he supposed would be able to furnish information. But on inquiry of these, the Attorney General had obtained no evidence of the truth of the charges. The memorialists had not stated the grounds of the charges, nor even averred that they themselves believed them. The Attorney General

said he would not advise whether mere hear-say evidence was sufficient to warrant a legislative investigation; but no such proceeding as that contemplated by the resolution, could be instituted by him in the absence of legal proof. Nothing further was heard of the subject.

No further legislative proceedings took place during that session, excepting the renewal, for another year, of the act authorising the Governor to continue the services of the special counsellor. But from the tone of Mr. Spencer's report, in which he had come directly to the point, respecting the conduct of the western Masons on the Morgan trials, he had given offence to certain members not to be forgiven; and they avenged themselves by cutting his pay down to the beggarly allowance of 1000 dollars. This measure was little short of a direct insult to Mr. Spencer, although it was probably dictated more by party spirit, than any other motive. This same spirit of party, is the vilest demon which walks to and fro in our land. Its interference is not confined to the political relations of our country, but is too often felt in our social, and even religious affairs. In the instance before us, the evidence was clear as though written in sun-beams, that party spirit was poisoning the sources of the law, and the streams of justice. The fact is not to be disguised—contradicted with truth it cannot be—that Anti-masonry had become so thoroughly political; its spirit was so vindictive towards the Freemasons, without discrimination as to guilt or innocence; and it was in every respect so unyielding, that, almost in the words of Mr. Spencer's report itself, "its effect had been to compel a more strict and close union among those members who still adhered to the institution, and to excite a sympathy in their favor among many of their fellow-citizens; and thus to retard and obstruct the attainment of its professed object." The ardor with which the Anti-masons pressed their political designs, abated the zeal both

of the legislature, and the Executive, in the prosecution of the investigations. With the return of every election, as the Anti-masons gained strength, in a corresponding ratio did those in power, who began to tremble for their places, become more reluctant in pushing forward the prosecutions, by reason of which their new opponents were so greatly profiting. Indeed, from the very outset of this controversy, in every legislative measure proposed or attempted, it was perfectly evident that the ruling majority were secretly opposed to the adoption of any extra efforts to bring the offenders to justice. Notwithstanding all their pretended anxiety to have the mystery of the fate of Morgan solved, and the delinquents punished, there was always a lurking feeling of reluctance visible in every motion of the majority, and in every debate. Not, perhaps, that they really wished murderers to go unpunished, but they feared, in the peculiar circumstances of the present case, that in the same degree in which they were aiding the ends of justice, they were likewise assisting a political party that might ere long push them from their places of dignity and power. It was very natural, therefore, that this spirit should have been more observable during the present session of the Legislature, as had been fully exemplified in the reception of the special counsel's report. More than sixty thousand Anti-masonic votes had been polled at the late election; and from the preparations then making for the next campaign, there was little reason to believe, that that number would be at all diminished. Most certainly it would not be, if, by the energy, the talent, and the perseverance of the special counsel, he should at last succeed in unravelling the mighty mystery, (of which result he now began to entertain strong hopes,) should that mystery be found to have terminated in the dreadful tragedy which was now on all hands believed to have marked its end. Looking at the matter, therefore, as party politicians, they had no special desire to produce

any further disclosures; and from the unbending integrity of the special counsel, and his untiring industry, it was obvious, that nothing on his part would be wanting to probe the matter to the bottom,—let the axe of justice fall wherever it might. Such are believed to have been some of the considerations which entered into the minds of the legislature, when in re-enacting the law making provision for the employment of the special counsel one year longer, they inserted a proviso limiting his pay to the sum of 1000 dollars. Such, unquestionably, was the opinion of the special counsel himself, founded not alone upon the action of the legislature, as we shall see presently, although at his suggestion, provision had been made for holding a special Court of Oyer and Terminer, early in the then ensuing summer, at which one of the judges of the Supreme Court was to preside.

Immediately after the receipt of a copy of the new act, thus continuing his appointment, but limiting his compensation, the special counsel addressed an able communication to his excellency the acting Governor, giving a history, in language of firm but temperate indignation, of the treatment he had received at the hands of the government, almost from the day on which he entered upon his duties. From this document, in order to give a just view of the case, it will be necessary for me to quote at considerable length. The only inducements to his acceptance of the commission, Mr. Spencer said, had been the hope of allaying the fears and anxieties which prevailed respecting the sufficiency of the laws to punish the outrage which had been committed, and the belief that a faithful and thorough investigation would satisfy an alarmed community, whether it resulted in the punishment of the guilty or not. In the appointment of a special agent to manage the prosecutions, Mr. S. contended that—

"The government became the prosecutor, and in that, as in every other executive function, it was represented by the Governor. The special counsel was not to be a private prosecutor, but the agent of the Executive. As such, it is most evident, he was entitled to the aid, advice, direction and support of the Executive and of the other branches of the government. In order to exhibit the urgent necessity of such aid and support, it could not be necessary to refer to the nature of the investigation, the large number of persons accused, their connexion with a powerful society, and their individual influence: for, said he, your excellency and the whole community but too well know the magnitude and amount of the obstacles to be encountered. Whether the whole constitutional power of the government would be sufficient to overcome them, was problematical; that any thing short of that power, would fail, was certain. Nothing but this conviction could have justified the law directing the employment of a special counsel. Under that conviction, and with full and entire confidence not only in the formal concurrence of the executive, but in his sincere and hearty co-operation, he entered upon the duties of the employment to which Governor Van Buren invited him."

Entering upon the duties of the office under such circumstances, he doubted not that he was to receive the sincere countenance and support, not only of the Executive, from whom he held his appointment, but from the legislature which had authorized it. But in this just and reasonable expectation, he had been disappointed. He said:—

"Positive aid, beyond the performance of formal duties from which there was no escape, has in no instance been rendered me. And instead of receiving any countenance or support, I have been suffered to stand alone, an isolated individual, carrying on the most laborious and difficult prosecutions, as if they were private suits instituted by me, and without any participation of the responsibility by the members of that government which employed me. Indeed their responsibility has been disclaimed by every means which the circumstances would allow."

As evidence of the indisposition of the state government to strengthen his hands in pursuing the arduous investigations in which he was engaged, he referred to the manner in which the suggestions contained in his annual report had been received, the debates in the legislature, to which I



have already briefly referred, and to the act limiting his compensation to such an inadequate amount. Upon this latter point, however, he held the following highly honorable language :—

“I owe it to myself to say that the *amount* of the compensation would not deter me from continuing in the employ of the government, if the circumstances justified, and duty required that continuance. It is not in that view that I regard the matter as worthy of a moment’s thought; but it is, that the amount proposed, the manner of the proposition, and the circumstances under which it was made, furnish to my mind indisputable evidence of the unfavorable sentiments entertained respecting the prosecutions or the agent conducting them, or both. The act presents the singular paradox of disavowing as far as possible the agency it proposes to renew, and of inviting the agent to proceed, in such repulsive language as to render his acceptance incompatible with the least self respect.”

But the cause of complaint, in Mr. Spencer’s mind, at least, did not terminate here : He proceeded—

“I have to complain also, that my official communications to your excellency, have been divulged, so as to defeat my measures and bring undeserved reproach upon me. Those communications related to the means of discovering evidence of the fact of William Morgan’s death; they were not only in their nature strictly confidential, but the success of the measures suggested, depended entirely upon their being unknown to the parties and their friends. Yet they became known to a counsel of the persons implicated in the offences upon William Morgan. I can not comment on this fact, in such a manner as to do justice to my feelings, and at the same time preserve the respect which is due to the chief magistrate of the state. It must be left to the consideration of all impartial men, with the single remark, that as it interposes an insurmountable obstacle to all further communications of a confidential character with your excellency, I should thus be deprived as special counsel of an aid altogether indispensable to further proceedings. That the reproach which the revelation of that correspondence has brought upon me, is undeserved, may at least be presumed from the fact of your excellency’s having continued my employment more than a year after those communications were made to you.”\*

\* Mr. Spencer has also elsewhere justly complained, that—“during the preceding winter, the senate of the state, of whom a large proportion, if not

From these and other circumstances which Mr. S. enumerated, he believed that his services were no longer acceptable to the Executive, and the dominant party by whom he was supported, and a sense of self-respect would not allow him to retain the situation. He believed, moreover, that, left as he was, without the aid of the executive arm, the prosecutions, in his hands, would lead to no successful results,—while, possibly, some other agent, more in favor with the government, might better succeed in the vindication of the laws. Prompted by these considerations, Mr. Spencer resigned his trust as special commissioner,—with the assurance, that, in handing over his papers to his successor, all possible assistance would be cheerfully rendered, to aid in the further prosecution of the investigations—several trials being then in a state of forward preparation.

The publication of this extraordinary letter of resignation, produced a great sensation in the public mind. The charges against the Executive, were of a very grave character, and they were preferred with too much explicitness, to be evaded. They were accordingly answered, semi-officially, through the medium of the state paper. The charge of having betrayed the confidential correspondence of the special counsel, so as to enable the counsel of the delinquents to profit by the knowledge they possessed of the

a majority, were masons, had passed a resolution calling on the comptroller for a detailed account of all the expenses incurred by the special counsel, with all the vouchers for the items. The accounts and vouchers were accordingly furnished and published, and thus disclosed to the world and the accused, the name of every witness who had been examined on the finding of the several indictments, and who was relied upon to sustain them. Every facility was thus given to the operation of the causes that had so often prevented witnesses from being found when they were wanted; and, when found, had prevented their attendance; or, if they attended, had produced short and imperfect memories. The efforts of an officer of the government were thus repudiated by the government itself; something worse than indifference was exhibited at the success of his exertions; and, instead of being sustained by the countenance of the government, he was left to contend against the large body of indicted individuals, and against the whole machinery of masonic combination, including the libels of the press, singly and unaided."

measures taking by the prosecution to bring them to justice, was flatly contradicted on behalf of the acting Governor. Several publications were made, *pro* and *con.*, and among them was a statement, under the hands of the counsel of the conspirators, declaring that neither of them, had ever received any information of the description referred to, from the Governor, or any person connected with the Executive. The information alledged to have been received in consequence of a betrayal of confidence by the acting Governor, was likewise certified by one of the defendant's counsel to have been imparted to him by none other than his own client. Two other documents were also disclosed, in a long and labored defence of the acting Governor, viz :—A letter from the special counsel, of the 29th of March, 1830, to the acting Governor, with the reply thereto of the latter, dated the 6th of April. The special counsel's letter here referred to, embraced many suggestions respecting the duties devolving on the writer as special counsel, the expenses necessarily incurred, &c. &c., upon which the advice of the Executive was desired. He also dwelt briefly upon the difficulties which still encompassed his path in the prosecutions. These were represented to be of the most formidable nature, and were thus enumerated by himself, viz :—

“1st. From the difficulty of discovering witnesses. 2d. From the few and slight means afforded by law to compel their attendance. 3d. From their reluctance and refusal to testify. And 4th. From the unceasing and untiring exertions of the Masons in the places where I have been, to thwart every effort, by getting witnesses out of the way, and by every other device to which human ingenuity can resort. I am sorry, (he adds,) to be compelled to give this account of the conduct of Masons. There are some honorable exceptions ; but they are few.”

But the prominent object of this letter, was to state to the Executive the important fact, that the special counsel had it at length in his power, as he believed, at once to bring the

investigations to a successful close ;—to accomplish which most desirable object, however, it would be necessary for him to have the disposition of the sum of two thousand dollars, which had been offered as a reward for the discovery of the criminals, by the late Governor Clinton, and which proclamation was yet in full force and virtue. Liberty to apply that sum of money, and also an assurance of pardon to the witness to be used, were accordingly requested. But I will quote from the letter itself :—

“In prosecuting my inquiries concerning the fate of William Morgan, there appears a witness of the utmost importance, who, I am persuaded, can disclose all the facts and circumstances of Morgan’s death. His name is Elisha Adams, and he is now indicted as an actor in the abduction of Morgan. He has hitherto refused to disclose. Without his testimony, we shall never be able to establish, judicially, the fact of Morgan’s death. I have prevailed upon an old and intimate friend of his, in whom he has the utmost confidence, residing at Sacket’s Harbor, to visit A., who is now at Youngstown, surrounded by Masons, and to endeavor to prevail on him to tell the whole truth. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to offer strong inducements. I propose therefore to apprise him, that a nolle prosequi will be entered on his indictment, that he will receive a pardon, and the reward offered in the proclamation of Governor Clinton, of March 19th, 1827. But I should not feel authorised to do so without the instruction of your excellency to that effect ; and I presume it will be indispensable that I should be able to produce written evidence of your directions. I therefore respectfully solicit your instructions on this head.”

This application, just and proper in itself, and usual in the administration of the criminal law of England and America, was coldly and cavalierly refused ; and it was this refusal, that formed the basis of the charge of the late special counsel, of a want of co-operation on the part of the Executive. It is proper, however, that the acting Governor should be allowed to speak for himself ; and I will therefore quote all that part of his letter referring to the point at issue :—

"I understand that you consider the testimony of Elisha Adams indispensable to prove Morgan's death ; that he stands indicted for his abduction ; and that you propose as inducements to him to testify, that a nolle prosequi shall be entered on his indictment, that he shall be pardoned, and that he shall receive the reward of \$2000, promised by Governor Clinton's proclamation. You ask my assent to this course. However desirable I may consider it to bring to punishment the murderers of Morgan, I cannot give my assent to a measure which would have so strong a tendency to induce a man, who now presents to the public unfavorable points of character, to commit perjury. If it were in my power, and you thought it advisable, I would pardon him, so as to take from him the power of refusing to answer under the pretence of criminating himself ; but the 5th sec. of art. 3 of the constitution, which confers on the Governor the power of pardon, limits it to cases ' after conviction.' The most that can be done to reach this evidence, is to exercise the common law power of favoritism to the accomplice who gives material testimony, and so far as my assent may be necessary and proper, it shall not be withheld. But that the accused may not be deprived of his legal rights, it is proper that every inducement to testify, which may be thus held out, should be made public, that the jury may judge of the bias under which he gives evidence."

Of most of the acts of Gov. Throop, in regard to the administration of the criminal law, so far as the executive action has been required, I have had occasion to express my decided approbation. Several cases are fresh in my mind, in which his excellency has been exceedingly pressed for pardons, or commutations of punishment ; and the course he has taken on such occasions, with the opinions given, have been such as to gain him credit both for his legal talents, and his firmness. But in the case under consideration, I am confident that every criminal lawyer in the land, whose judgment is unwarped by party feeling, would, without the smallest hesitation, declare him clearly in the wrong. The request, under the circumstances, was perfectly reasonable and proper. The contingency had occurred which was contemplated by Gov. Clinton, when the reward was offered ; and had that distinguished jurist,—for he was alike a lawyer and a statesman,—yet lived, it would have been

promptly paid. The proclamation had not been revoked by either of the administrators of the government since his decease ; and it was therefore as much in force, as on the day after the seal had been affixed to it. The suggestion on the score of encouragement to bribery, made by the Governor, and subsequently used as the burden of his defence by all the "arranged" presses in the state, was a mere pretext,—an attempt to frame a plausible and popular excuse for an act calculated at once to disappoint the expectations, and cool the ardor, of the public prosecutor, while, at the same time, it would most likely have the still further effect of preventing those full disclosures, so anxiously sought by the public. You may call it bribery, if you please ; but it would have been no farther a bribe, save only in amount, than is authorised by the criminal law of England, and every state in this Union, in all cases where the administrators of the law believe that the cause of justice can be furthered, and the public interests benefitted, by the employment of states' evidences who have been participators, directly or indirectly, in the crimes sought to be disclosed and punished. Every states' evidence who receives from the counsel for the prosecution, an assurance of pardon, on condition of testifying against his accomplices in guilt, may be said in the same sense to be bribed. And yet it is the every day practice in our criminal courts to employ such testimony, of which fact no man is better aware than Gov. Throop. He has been on the bench ; and if, at Canandaigua, Loton Lawson had come forward as a states' evidence, with a promise of making a full disclosure, I have no doubt that the Judge's approbation of "the blessed spirit," would then have prompted the measure. I regret being obliged thus to speak of this act of our generally correct and estimable chief magistrate ; but I feel that my censures are just, and I do not wonder at the disappointment and chagrin

of the special counsel, on receiving such an unlooked for and abrupt refusal.

The charge of the special counsel, that the Executive had betrayed the contents of his confidential letters to the counsel of the conspirators, was not well founded. I have no idea that Gov. Throop knowingly did any such thing. I have heard a suggestion, however, which, if correct, would account for the incident that induced Mr. Spencer to suppose he had been thus trifled with, without compromising the conduct of the Executive. In these high criminal matters, as in all other state affairs, it was probably the practice of Gov. T.,—certainly it ought to have been,—to call in the advice of those official gentlemen by whom he is surrounded, and who are his friends. One of his cabinet counsellors had recently been a partner in business with a western gentleman, who was at that period a member of the legislature. And that former partner, and member of the legislature, was so unfortunate as to have a brother among the parties under indictment for the conspiracy. Does not this fact render the matter of easy solution?

I am, sir, with respect, &c.

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## LETTER XXXIX.

NEW-YORK, March 21, 1832.

SIR,

I have heretofore mentioned some instances, and hinted at others, in which efforts have been made, from time to time, by the political leaders of the Anti-masonic party, to prolong the excitement by artificial means, and to rekindle the dying embers with additional fuel, as occasion might require. It is now proper to advert, in chronological or-

der, to another, and perhaps the most interesting of those attempts. This was the publication in all the Anti-masonic papers in this state, of an affidavit made at Boston before John W. Quincy, Esq., by Samuel G. Anderton, relative to an alledged murder by Freemasons, of one William Miller, at Belfast, in Ireland.

The affidavit states, that in the spring of 1813, the deponent revisited Belfast, (having been there before, and become acquainted with Wm. Miller and other Masons,) and was induced to offer himself as a candidate for the higher degrees of Masonry. On the evening of the 4th of June of that year, he went to the lodge room. "The whole number of Masons there of all degrees, was seventy-one, or seventy-two. That night I took the degrees of Arch, Royal Arch and Knight Templar." Anderton proceeds to say that during the same evening, and soon after he was dubbed a Knight Templar, he was told that a Mason would be there who had violated his obligations, by saying that *Jachin and Boaz was a true book*; that he had broken his oaths; was a damned perjured wretch; had forfeited his life; and ought not to live any longer among men or Masons.

He (the deponent) wished to leave the room, but was told that "it was never allowed on such occasions." They were then ordered to cast lots to see who should officiate as executioners, and the lots fell (he thinks unfairly,) upon three foreigners, viz, a Swede, a Dane and himself. The Swede and Dane were strong, athletic men,—masters of vessels,—and strangers to the deponent, who was struck with indescribable horror and astonishment, beyond any exigency to which he had been previously reduced. "Amidst all my other dangers," says he, "I felt that I was doing my duty; but this I concluded would be murder in cold blood."



The narrator had been told in the course of the day by Miller, that he (Miller,) was to be made a Knight Templar that evening *free of expense*; and he (Anderton,) now learned that Miller was the individual about to suffer death, and for whose murder he had been specially designated. "I told them, (says Anderton,) I could not do it. I begged and entreated; told them I had as lief have my own throat cut as commit such an act. My feelings were so distressed, and I expressed myself in such a manner, that after some time I was excused. The Swede and Dane, according to my best remembrance, did not object. Several others said 'they would help to execute any one who broke his obligations; that every Mason ought to help to do it,' or words to that effect." "They had a canvass cloth cap, or bag, to put over his head, and to come down a little below the chin, rigged with small ropes or strong cords, fixed in the lower part of it, so as to slip easily, that when the cap was on, and the cords drawn each way, right and left, the cap would be gathered tight under the chin so as to shut his mouth, and at the same time draw so close round his neck and throat as to strangle him."—"It was now the black hour of midnight. The executioners took their stations a little to the left of the high priest." Miller having doubtless been decoyed by the promise of being made a Knight Templar *free of expense*, was then conducted into the room, hoodwinked, with his coat off, somewhat in the condition that candidates usually are. "He was led along slowly from the west up near his executioners, when some one said, 'Who comes there?' 'who comes there?' The answer was bawled out as they siezed him, 'a damned traitor; one who has broken his masonic obligations.' With that he exclaimed, 'O my God! are you going to murder me? O my wife! O my children!' The agony, the strong struggle, and the

“half utterance of these words, and the final shriek, as the cap went over his head and face, pierced me to the heart, and was enough as I should think, to soften the hearts of savages, if they had not taken masonic oaths.”

“Those horrid sounds of the tortured victim seem still to ring in mine ears. No sooner was the murderous cap drawn over his face, and his whole head enveloped, than, at the same instant, the Swede and Dane appeared to spring with all their might and strength, drawing each in opposite directions, by ropes or cords around his neck!! Poor Miller, after the most frantic struggles, like a person in a fit, then settled down to the floor in the most dreadful convulsions. Other Masons fell on him, while the Swede and Dane, bracing their feet against his body, still pulled by the cords! there while struggling on the floor, they cut his throat! and then cut his left breast and side open, so as to show his heart!! Some, very few, Masons present, seemed, by their looks, to express some sympathy and compassion, while the rest, using the most profane, revengeful language, with their fists clenched, grinned with horrid approbation! The body was then carried down stairs, while several Masons kept watch for fear of detection, and was thrown over into Limekiln Dock!! I got away from this scene of masonic murder as soon as possible, with the most awful impressions. Before I left Belfast, I heard by common report, that the body was taken up the next day, and that a coroner's inquest decided that William Millier *was murdered by persons unknown*—or something to that effect.”

Such is the relation of Samuel G. Anderton, and it is not to be denied that the publication of this tragical story made for a time a deep impression upon the public mind. The minuteness of its details, and the general air of probability thrown over it, was calculated to make such an impression. I felt it myself, and held repeated conversations with some of my friends who were Masons, and who were equally astounded with myself. So important did I consider it, that I resolved if possible to institute an investigation of its truth or falsity. An American gentleman,—a Royal Arch Mason, with whom I am intimately acquainted,—who had been much in Ireland of late, undertook the investigation. He was well acquainted with a gentleman in Bel-

fast, a man of intelligence and undoubted integrity, who was not a Mason; and it was deemed proper to seek through him the requisite information.

The act alledged by Anderton to have taken place at Belfast, was even more atrocious than the murder of Morgan. It was more barbarous in its character, and perpetrated *officially*, by a lodge, instead of being the act of infatuated individuals. Assuming this fearful aspect, both myself and my friend determined that if the investigation did not result in the refutation of Anderton's statement, we would publicly renounce Freemasonry.

Pursuant to this arrangement, a letter was addressed on the 15th of May, 1830, to Mr. Edward Tucker, of Belfast, requesting full and accurate information on the subject. A copy of Anderton's affidavit, was inclosed, together with a copy of the affidavit of Agnes Bell, and a copy of the report of a committee in Boston,—the two latter, however, principally for the purpose of facilitating inquiry. The reply was not received until the 15th of October of the same year; but it proved most conclusively that the whole story was a gross fabrication.

“If such an occurrence, says Mr. Tucker, had taken place, it is incredible, that in a town like this, where *three* newspapers were published, so extraordinary a circumstance as the discovery of a man's body in the dock, with his throat and side cut open, should escape notice. Now, *all* the papers of that period have been minutely examined, and not the slightest allusion to such an event can be met with. In the ‘Commercial Chronicle’ of 7th or 8th of June, 1813, which I examined, there is a paragraph headed ‘another murder,’ but it is in relation to an old woman in Scotland, and has reference to some shocking murders lately perpetrated in London. The time is not very remote, and yet no one can be found in this place who recollects any such tragical death, or its attendant rumors.”

The story of Anderton had found its way to Ireland before my friend's communication had arrived there;—an examination had been instituted; and in relation to it, the

Guardian, one of the most respectable newspapers in that kingdom, remarks under the editorial head as follows:—

“We have made inquiry respecting this calumnious story, and find that it is a tissue of falsehood from beginning to end. No such person as William Miller was ever admitted into any lodge in this town; and Mr. Allan, the coroner, declares that he has examined his books, or registry, from a period prior to the year 1813, down to the present time, and that no inquest was held on the body of any individual of that name; and that if any report of such a murder had been current in Belfast, he must have heard it.”

But the refutation was not left to stand upon mere assertion, however conclusive in its terms, or however respectable the affirmant. It was sustained by testimony under oath, of which the following by the coroner would seem to be irresistible:—

“The voluntary deposition of Henry Allan, of Belfast, in the county of Antrim, in that part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, called Ireland, Esq., who, being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists, upon his oath, saith, that he was appointed a coroner for said county in March, 1813, and hath regularly resided in Belfast since that period, and been the only coroner resident therein; and saith, he has carefully examined his register of inquests, and that he never did hold an inquest on any person of the name of William Miller, nor did he ever hear of a person of that name having been found dead in Belfast, or of an inquest having been held on any person of that name; and deponent hath presided at every inquest held in Belfast since he was appointed coroner, except one, on the bodies of two men, named Grimes and Menary, who were shot in a riot in North-street, Belfast, on the 12th of July, 1813.”

The secretary of the lodge in which Anderton lays the scene of his tragedy, also made affidavit that there was no man either of the name of Anderton, or Miller, admitted into the lodge during the time of his secretaryship, which embraced the whole period between 1811 and 1814. Eight other persons, members of the lodge, testified under oath—

“That they respectively never knew a person of the name of Wm. Miller as a member of that lodge, nor does any of them ever recollect a person of

that name having been a visiter in that lodge; and deponents say, that they never knew any person of the name of Samuel G. Anderton to have been admitted as a Mason in that lodge, or as a visiter in it, *nor did they ever know a person of the name of Anderton either as a mason or otherwise.*" And the deponents further "severally swear that the statements made in said affidavit respecting the said Samuel G. Anderton, having been admitted a member of said lodge, number 372, and respecting the murder of a person named William Miller in that lodge, are in all respects, and in every particular, gross, infamous, and unfounded falsehoods, as far as these deponents are concerned, and as far as these deponents know, or have heard, no such transactions having ever taken place."

These depositions were sworn to at Belfast on the 31st May, 1830, before C. M. Skinner, police magistrate for Belfast, and Henderson Black and Robert Thompson, Esqs., justices of the peace for the county of Antrim, and seem in connexion with the representations of Mr. Tucker, and of the editor of the Belfast Guardian, to form a refutation of Anderton's story, as conclusive as can be established by human testimony.

It has indeed been asked what adequate motive could have operated upon the mind of Anderton to induce him to forswear himself? To this it may be answered, that it is not easy at any time to assign an *adequate* motive for the violation of truth;—and yet it is notorious that it is violated from time to time, with and without the sanction of an oath, and that too *very* often, with *VERY* small temptation. Pecuniary interest, and personal vanity, arising from the gratification of becoming distinguished, are perhaps the most common causes,—and although we are not aware that the former could have operated in the present instance, yet it is easy to conceive that the latter might; and that it would possess additional inducement at a time of public excitement.

But it has also been suggested in relation to Anderton, how could he have invented, by the mere force of imagina-

tion, a scene so minute in its details, and so vivid in its dramatic effect, unless it was founded in truth?

Really I do not perceive in this narrative a greater minuteness or accuracy of detail, nor a more vivid creation of fancy, than is often found in ordinary works of fiction, or even in nursery tales. No man, in relating a murder of which he assumes to have been a witness, (whether true or false,) would forbear to state the particulars in minute detail, if he expected to be believed,—for the whole scene, and each particular, of such an awful occurrence, must be presumed to have made a deep impression on his mind. The relator, therefore, would naturally be ready to meet such expectation; and after the outlines of the piece have been struck out, it can require no very deep reach of the imagination to fill up the shades and coloring of the picture. But there are points and errors in this representation which show that it was not drawn by the hand of a master.

In addition to the extraneous evidence of its falsity, there are internal proofs of its want of accuracy and truth.

Sixteen years had elapsed between the alledged occurrence, and the date of the affidavit; and yet Anderton not only swears to the year, and the month, and the day of the month, on which the murder took place, but he also avers that the number of Masons present was seventy-one, or seventy-two! Now had he been a teller, instead of a visiting brother, it is hardly to be credited that he could have arrived at such extreme accuracy among a floating body. What inducement was there for him to count the number?—or if he did, how unusual it is that it should be treasured up for such a series of years! I appeal for the test of its probability to the experience of every man who has been in the habit of visiting a promiscuous assembly, of whatever character. The very next sentence contains a falsehood. He says, that on the night of the murder, he, the deponent, took the degrees of Arch, Royal Arch, and Knight Templar.

Now it is susceptible of the most undoubted proof that there exists neither in this country, nor in Ireland, the degree of Arch as contradistinguished from the Royal Arch, and yet he asserts, as clearly as language can convey a meaning, that he took three degrees the same night, of which two only have ever had existence! Another part of the story is, to say the least of it, very singular. The murder was perpetrated, it would seem, in an encampment of Knights Templars, and the offence was an averment by Miller that Jachin and Boaz, a book that does not profess to reveal the secrets of the Knight Templar's degree, was true. Human experience does not often record the perpetration of *gratuitous* murders; yet here is an accusation of the spilling of blood by one set of men, in revenge for the wrongs inflicted upon another!

Without dwelling, however, upon the inaccuracy of stating that a *high priest* presided over a Knight Templar's *encampment*, and various other inconsistencies, there is one general and entire objection to its probability, which must, I think, fully confirm the direct refutation that has been presented in contradiction to the story.

This barbarous murder is alledged to have been perpetrated, not like the supposed destruction of Morgan, in the lone, dark border of a secluded frontier, but in the midst of a populous city:—no conclave arrangements had excluded from witness or participation those who might betray the horrid secret;—on the contrary, the doors of the lodge-room or encampment, were open not only to those who had plotted the guilt, but to visiting brethren and strangers! Nor is this all. The strangers are made the executioners—a Dane—a Swede—an American—all foreigners, are to perpetrate this foul deed, at the mere instance and request of their Belfast brethren! The Dane, and the Swede, made no objection; but he, Anderton, was “so distressed,” that they excused him!!—Would men so deep in guilt,

when they found a comrade so faint-hearted, have excused him—or would they not have plunged a dagger in his bosom to prevent his dangerous tales? And is it credible that Swedes and Danes, rarely visiting the port of Belfast—rarely speaking the language with correctness, and rarely being able to understand each other, would have so readily comprehended the foul offence of admitting Jachin and Boaz to be *a true book*, and have been so ready to embrue their hands in blood to avenge the admission?

Yet the super-remarkable incidents of this tragedy do not end here. Unlike the skilful precautions that, as will hereafter be seen, were used in the case of Morgan, to prevent the implication of each other, the Belfast murderers not only perpetrated the deed in the open presence of many and “distressed” witnesses,—foreigners and visiting brethren assembled from any and every quarter of the world,—but such was their infatuation, that after strangling their victim until he was dead, dead, dead—they cut his throat, without the fear of its tell-tale stain upon the floor, and put upon him the *masonic mark*, by cutting open his side and left breast, so as to show his heart!!! This, as the invoked penalty of the obligation that he had taken and violated, must have been done for the purpose of procuring testimony to convict themselves;—and then, to consummate the evidence, the body, with this *official label* upon it, to indicate the perpetrators, is cast into one of the most public docks of the city!!!

When human nature shall tread backward, we may believe the story of Samuel G. Anderton—but until then—**NEVER.**

With great respect, I remain, &c.



## LETTER XL.

NEW-YORK, March 22, 1832.

SIR,

The next trial was that of Ezekiel Jewett, which commenced on the 15th of June, 1830, at the Niagara Special Circuit. Hon. William L. Marcy presiding. Counsel for the government, Messrs. Birdseye, (special counsel,) Whitney and Ransom; for the defendant, Messrs. Matthews, Griffin, Barnard and Mason. Mr. White appeared as counsel for the masonic witnesses. Jonathan Aire was drawn as a juror, and challenged by the counsel for the government *for principal cause*, to wit, for being a Mason.

Judge Marcy, by consent of parties, was substituted for the triers. Aire being sworn, testified that he was a Freemason, and had passed through three degrees. He had heard that the defendant is a Mason, but should not feel bound to show favor to a Mason on trial,—nor had he ever said that Masons should not be punished for their acts relative to this affair. He did not recollect the precise words of the obligations he had taken, but he believed he swore by a book, which he had never read, but had looked into it. His obligation was to live uprightly, but he did not consider himself bound to show a Mason more favor than any other man. There was a sign of distress, and he believes that if a Mason or any other person was in danger of his life, he was bound to assist him. There was an exception in the obligation to render assistance, but what it was he could not recollect. He was bound to keep the secrets of a brother Mason, but could not recollect the *clause* about going with a master's errand. There had been no commu-

nications by masonic signs or otherwise, between him and the defendant now on trial.

Milton W. Hopkins was now called as a witness to show the purport of the masonic obligations. It was objected by counsel for the defendant, that before the testimony of witness could be introduced to show the purport of masonic obligations, it must be proved that the masonic oaths were similar in the different lodges. Witness then stated that he had taken three degrees, besides one or two side degrees, and was very conversant with Masonry. He had been in many lodges in different parts of this state ; and all masonic societies, with which he is acquainted, have the same signs and tokens. He had been in the masonic lodges in Canada, and heard the obligations taken there,—the ceremonies were the same in Canada as in New-York. He had heard the obligation of a Master Mason taken in several different places, and it is substantially the same in all places, and so are the ceremonies.

The court decided that as the testimony of the witness showed that the masonic fraternity were the same throughout the world—the oath or obligation of a Master Mason in one lodge, ought to be received as *prima facie* evidence of the oath or obligation administered to the juror.

The witness then proceeded to recite the substance of a Master Mason's obligation, substantially as disclosed by Morgan ; after which he underwent a long examination upon the subject of the obligations and rules of the order in general, which it is quite unnecessary to repeat in sketching the present trial. The witness said he was made a Mason in Jefferson county, in 1817. There are weekly meetings to rehearse the obligations ;—at these meetings it is usual to go through all the masonic ceremonies. He had learnt the oaths so perfectly that he could now repeat them *verbatim*. He had heard the obligations administered in different lodg-

es, and they were the same in each place ;—sometimes, however, a clause, not material, is left out, or, perhaps, a part is omitted by mistake. In 1827 he revealed these obligations to others than Masons. A lecturer, he said, was sent every year from the Grand Lodge, for the purpose of correcting errors, and seeing that the signs, obligations, &c. are kept precisely the same in all the lodges. The jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of New-York is confined to the limits of the state ; and he knew not of any connexion between the lodges in this state and the lodges in Canada. Witness had never heard that political obligations were incorporated into the oath in this or foreign countries. A charge is given when a member is admitted : the charge is written, in a book, and is often read. The substance of this charge is, to be good citizens, good men, and good Masons. Charity and obedience to the laws are inculcated, and the candidate is assured before taking the obligation, that it will not interfere with his religion or his politics. It was objected by defendant's counsel, that if the charge was written, or printed in a book, it ought to be produced, but the objection was over-ruled by the court. The witness further stated, that the charge enjoined upon the candidate to perform all his relative duties as a citizen, but more particularly his duties as a Mason.

William Hodgkirs was now introduced. He stated that the defendant was a Mason. He did not know of exactly what degree, but he did know him to be a Royal Arch Mason.

Mr. Birdseye here intimated to the court, that a connexion by signs, &c. existed between Aire the juror and the defendant.

The testimony as to the qualifications of the juror being closed, and the counsel for the prosecution, and for the defendant, having been heard, Judge Marcy, after recapitulating

the substance of the masonic obligations as disclosed in the testimony of Hopkins, in giving his decision, remarked, in substance, as follows :—

“ That the conclusions to which he came in relation to the challenge to the juror, (Jonathan Aire,) were, that the oaths taken by Masons are wholly extra-judicial, and in a legal point of view, are not to be regarded as binding upon the persons to whom they are administered. If, by fair construction, these oaths enjoined partiality to a brother Mason in the relation of juror and party, the engagement would not be strictly and legally obligatory. The taking of such an oath would not, therefore, be a *principal cause* of challenge to a juror. But, if, by the fair construction of masonic obligations, and the *juror's understanding of them*, he had engaged to extend favor to a brother Mason, when that favor would be an act contrary to law, or in any respect contrary to his duty as a juror, the fact of his having placed himself under such an obligation, would be a good ground of challenge for favor, and substituted as I am, by consent of parties, for the triers, I should feel it my duty to set aside a juror on such a challenge, if it was sustained.

“ It is quite uncertain what were the obligations which Aire took,—but assuming that they were similar to those in the oath repeated by Hopkins—most of them, it will be observed, enjoin acts in accordance with high moral duties ;—and all of them, I think, may apply to acts which do not necessarily conflict with the laws of the state, or any duty enjoined by those laws. Considering the nature of these obligations, the assurance given to the candidate, before they are administered, and the charges that follow, I cannot say that a Mason could rightfully suppose that he thereby became barred to do any thing contrary to his duty as a good citizen.

“ That there are Masons so infatuated as to entertain an opinion that their masonic obligations are paramount to the civil laws, in some instances, and that they violated the latter by obeying the former, cannot now be doubted ;—but I cannot yield to the belief that such is the general condition of the order. To any of those who act upon such a principle, and form, as I apprehend they do, an exception to the mass of the fraternity, I should hold the objection now made to this juror as well taken. But in relation to this juror, it does not appear that he assumed a masonic obligation clearly incompatible with his civil duty ; nor is there evidence to call up a reasonable suspicion that he ever regarded his masonic obligations in any other light than as subservient to his civil duties.

“ If it had been, or could be, shown, that Aire entertained the opinion that his masonic obligations were inconsistent with his civil duties as a citizen of this government,—that he had in the slightest manner countenanced the outrage committed in this part of the state,—or even approved of the principle on which the infatuated men, engaged in that transaction, proceed-

ed,—I should not hesitate to pronounce him disqualified to take a seat among the jurors who are to try this cause. But, as he stands before this court, I cannot reject him without setting a precedent that would subject to a challenge for favor, every Mason in the state, in those cases where any of the fraternity might be parties. Such a proceeding has not yet been sanctioned, and, I trust, is not yet required, for the purposes of the due administration of justice. I therefore decide that Aire be admitted as a juror.”\*

Nathaniel Denman was now drawn as a juror,—being sworn as a witness to prove his qualifications to serve,—he stated, that he was a Mason, and had, about two years ago, sat in a lodge. The obligations which he had taken were the same as detailed by Hopkins. He had met with the lodge ten times or more,—but had never heard any thing said in the lodge as to the Morgan affair. He believed that Masons carried off Morgan, but never approved of it. He yet believed himself bound to keep his oath. The grand hailing signs of distress, he said, were given only when life was in danger, and not on such a trial as the present. He thought, however, he should show all the favor he could to a brother Mason.

The court thereupon put this question to the witness:—Should you be disposed to show more favor to a Mason than to a person not a Mason, on a trial? The witness replied that he did not know but he should. The court decided that he was disqualified to sit as juror. All the jurors drawn were challenged, and several others were set aside, for having expressed an opinion touching the guilt of the defendant at the bar, or of the masonic fraternity generally. In several instances, the persons drawn as jurors, not Masons, had expressed the strongest opinions, not only as to the guilt of the defendant, but of every member of the masonic fraternity. Such jurors were of course set aside.

After a very brief opening by Mr. Whiting, to the jury, in which he explained the nature of the cause they were

\* This decision is substantially copied from the manuscript notes of the Judge himself, politely furnished for my use in the present work.

empannelled to try, and alluded to the more prominent facts which the counsel for the government expected to prove. Orsamus Turner was called upon the stand. Before giving his testimony however, the witness requested permission to confer with his counsel, which was objected to by the counsel for the prosecution, on the ground that he had known for ten days that he would be called to testify in this cause. The court refused to grant the application of the witness, at this stage of the trial, and the examination proceeded.

Turner stated, that in September, 1826, he resided in Lockport—was at that time a member of the masonic fraternity, and knew the defendant, who then resided at Fort Niagara, and was the keeper of the fort. The fact that one William Morgan was about publishing a book relating to Freemasonry, was known among Masons at the time just mentioned. The propriety of suppressing the book was discussed, and measures proposed for accomplishing the object. One of these measures was the removal of Morgan from his friends in Batavia. Certain persons in Batavia were consulted as to the propriety of this measure; they did not approve of it, and it was finally concluded not to make any definite movement in the matter. Witness had heard that Morgan was coming to this place, (Lockport,) but at present knew not from whom he heard it. He was also, ignorant as to any measures for his removal and confinement in jail.

The following question was now put to the witness :—  
“ Was the defendant one of the persons consulted with, in relation to separating Morgan from his friends at Batavia, as a means of suppressing the contemplated publication of a book concerning the secrets of Freemasonry ? ” This question the witness declined answering on the ground that his answer might subject him to a similar prosecution—and his counsel contended that the answer of the witness might

involve himself in an indictment for murder,—as it was alledged that Morgan was murdered, and such was probably the fact.

The court remarked that the witness must know that a crime had been committed, before he could claim the privilege of not answering a question upon the ground that the answer might have a tendency to involve him in a prosecution for that crime. The counsel for the people contended that the prosecution had not set up any such offence as murder,—that it was not in possession of any positive evidence upon which to found such an indictment,—and that the record of acquittal then before the court, exonerated the witness from any prosecution for a misdemeanor.

The counsel for witness replied that the absence of such positive evidence was no reason why the witness had not cause to fear,—for the very object of the inquiry might be to elicit such evidence,—and the answer of the witness might have a tendency to render him infamous, or disgraced, and he would therefore submit to the court whether the witness should answer the question.

The court ruled, that it was not sufficient to entitle the witness to the privilege claimed, that the answer *might have a tendency* to render him infamous or disgraced;—the question must be such that the answer to it will show directly the infamy, *and the court must see that such will be the case*, before the privilege will be allowed. As to the objection that the answer of witness may have a *tendency* to implicate him in a crime or misdemeanor, or expose him to a penalty or forfeiture, the court remarked, that the witness cannot be compelled to answer any interrogatory that will involve him in a criminal prosecution. If the court were satisfied that the answer of witness would furnish direct evidence of his own guilt, or would establish one of many facts which together would warrant his conviction, then the privilege would be allowed. But the witness can-

not set up such a defence unless he *knows* that his answer *will* so involve him. To entitle to the privilege, the answer to the particular question put must so involve the witness in an indictment. On the trial of Aaron Burr, for treason, a witness was shown a letter in cipher. He refused to answer whether he knew it or not ;—and the case before us is similar.

The counsel for the witness remarked, that the cases differed,—because the witness is here asked whether he knew the defendant was consulted anterior to the trial. The court replied, that the witness must claim the privilege when in danger : Burr's case was not like the present,—*there* the concerting was a crime—not so *here*, The counsel for witness further objected that the witness did not rest his refusal to answer on the misdemeanor, but on the ground that a murder has actually been committed. Some inquiry would then be had.

The Court said ; “ you must establish that point : every person who helped take off Morgan, would not be liable to an indictment for his murder, as that crime might have been committed in pursuance of other and subsequent counsels.”

The counsel for witness suggested that if it were shown that the witness was at defendant's house consulting with persons on the subject of Morgan's abduction, it might be against him—it would bring home to him a knowledge of the transaction.

The court replied—you think that this question may be followed up by others that would involve him in a criminal prosecution ;—when such are put to the witness, he may refuse to answer—but he takes his stand too soon.

Messrs. Griffin and Barnard, counsel for the defendant, contended that the question was improper in regard to the defendant, as the form of it obliges him to answer as to a matter of fact. Can the witness say that defendant was consulted if he had only the confession of the defendant ?



And should the witness answer the question put to him in the affirmative, the counsel may follow it up and interrogate him as to the manner of his knowing it. If, then, he should be required to answer, he might divulge the fact that he communicated with the defendant himself—and thus criminate himself and become liable to a criminal prosecution.

The Court again addressed the witness and told him that his privilege must be overruled, and that he must answer the question. Witness—"I will not answer." Court—"I shall punish you then."—Before directing the clerk to enter the rule, Judge Marcy observed, that the witness was liable to be indicted for every contempt,—and that each one must be entered on the record, as he should direct the District Attorney to find bills for each refusal separately.

The following record was then entered on the minutes of the court.—

"Orsamus Turner, a witness in the cause of *the People v. Ezekiel Jewett*," having refused to answer the following question, "was the defendant one of the persons consulted with in relation to separating Morgan from his friends at Batavia, as a means of suppressing the contemplated publication of a book concerning the secrets of Freemasonry,"—after the court had decided, that it was a legal and proper interrogatory for him to answer:—The court do adjudge, that by such refusal he is guilty of contempt in open court. It does, therefore, sentence him to pay a fine therefor, of two hundred and fifty dollars, and be imprisoned for the space of thirty days in the jail of the county of Niagara."\*

The examination of the witness being resumed, he was asked—"Do you know that the defendant consented or agreed to prepare the magazine at Fort Niagara for the reception and confinement of William Morgan?"—The

\* During Turner's confinement he was supplied by his masonic friends with every luxury that the country could furnish, and that money could procure; he was constantly visited by his masonic brethren, and their wives and daughters; and at the expiration of his term of imprisonment, was conducted from the jail to his residence in a coach and four, with attending Masons, shouting at the triumph of crime over justice!

witness refused to answer this question. It being nearly the same question as the other, he feared it might involve him in a criminal prosecution.—By the court—"you are asked whether the defendant did agree to prepare the magazine."—The witness replied that it was a leading question, and he could not answer it without danger.

The counsel for witness requested permission to consult with him.—The court remarked, that the witness had imbibed strange and erroneous ideas,—that the court wished to preserve the rights of the witness, but that the rigor of the law must be enforced, if he refused to answer questions pronounced to be proper ones by the court, from which he is alone to receive the law.

The counsel for the witness thought the answer would involve him in an indictment for murder.

The question, at the suggestion of the court, was varied and put in the following form,—“Have you heard the defendant confess or admit that he had consented or agreed to prepare the magazine?” Witness answered that he had not—never heard him say that he had consented that the magazine should be used for the confinement of William Morgan.—The second question being again put, he answered that he had no *positive proof* of it,—but refused to tell what proof he had—and urged the same objections as before.

The witness was then asked, “Do you know whether the defendant was applied to for a place in or about Fort Niagara for the purpose of confining William Morgan?”—Witness refused to answer and claimed his privilege. The court decided that he must answer. He still refused; whereupon the court proceeded to pass sentence on the witness for contempt—and he was sentenced therefor to imprisonment in the jail of the county of Niagara for thirty days. The witness not having property, the fine was not imposed, as it would mitigate the punishment on the indictment.

The examination of the witness being again resumed, he stated that he never heard defendant, in conversation with others, one or more, *admit* that such application had been made to him,—never heard defendant say that he had agreed to prepare a place for Morgan,—and did not recollect positively, that, in the presence of the defendant, he had heard any person say, that the defendant had so agreed—and did not know that the defendant was present when the propriety of carrying off Morgan was discussed.

Witness being asked, “Have you ever been present at  
“a conversation between two or more persons, at which  
“the defendant was present, on the subject of confining  
“Morgan?” refused to answer. The question being varied, was finally put thus: “Were you ever present when  
“the subject of preparing a place at Fort Niagara, or at  
“any other place in the county of Niagara, was discussed  
“in the presence of the defendant?” The court decided the question to be a proper one, and directed the witness to answer it;—but he urged his privilege, and refused—and the court thereupon ordered another entry to be made of contempt, and sentenced the witness to an imprisonment of thirty days.

The examination being again resumed, witness was asked, “if he did not go to Fort Niagara in September, 1826,  
“and see Jewett?” but he again refused to answer. He was then asked if “he did not swear so before the grand  
“jury?” The counsel for witness objected to the question, and it was not pressed.

Eli Bruce was now called as a witness, but refused to be sworn, saying, “he was once before sworn and examined, and no good came of it.” The court adjudged him guilty of contempt in open court, and sentenced him to imprisonment for the space of thirty days, in the jail of the county of Ontario,—the witness being then a prisoner in the custody of the sheriff of that county, and having been

brought up to testify in this cause by a writ of Habeas Corpus.

John Whitney being called as a witness, refused to be sworn. The court sentenced him also to imprisonment of thirty days, and to pay a fine of two hundred and fifty dollars.\*

John Jackson was the next material witness called upon this trial. He will be recollected as the person who went to the magazine, in company with Giddings, on the morning after it was believed Morgan had been confined in the fort. On being sworn, he was asked whether, on the morning of the 14th of September, 1826, he and Giddings, or Giddings alone, went to the magazine, but he refused to answer the question, believing it to be an improper one, which might subject him to an indictment for an offence of high magnitude.

The court said he could not be prosecuted for the conspiracy; a prosecution for that offence is barred by the statute.

Griffin—Witness does not wish to disclose the act for which he fears a prosecution; this is the very thing he wishes to conceal.

Court—Do you suppose it would involve you in a prosecution for murder?

The witness answered that he did not know how far it would affect him; did not know it would involve him in a charge of murder. He had been told by Mr. Spencer, that if he would tell all, he would protect him.

The Court—The witness cannot first presume an offence to have been committed, and then claim a privilege not to answer a question, on the ground that such answer would involve him in a prosecution for a presumed offence. The witness must know that a crime has been committed, before

\* While these sheets are passing through the press, I learn from a Lockport paper, that Bruce and Whitney have both been tried this spring, on indictments for misdemeanors, in so refusing to be sworn, and have each been fined therefor in the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars.

he can claim the privilege. To claim the privilege on mere presumption that such a result would occur, rendered witness guilty of perjury. If, however, witness would brave heaven and earth, and commit perjury, it could not be helped. By answering, the witness need not admit that he murdered Morgan; but he must know it beyond a doubt.

Barnard—Every man in the community believes that a murder has been committed.

The witness now requested permission to confer with counsel, which was granted. On his return, he still refused to answer the question. The court repeated that witness must be well satisfied that a crime had been committed, before he could claim the privilege.

The counsel for the people here asked witness if he did not testify on this point in open court, at Canandaigua? Witness replied that he answered the same question, or one of like import, on the trial of Bruce.

The court decided that if witness had once waived his privilege, it could not grant him the privilege now.

Question repeated. "Did you go to the magazine on the morning of the 14th of September, 1826, before you went to Lewiston?" Witness, after again consulting counsel, said he did go towards the magazine, in company with another person: *might* have gone within one rod of it; it was not defendant who went with him.

Q. "What was your object in going to the magazine?" Witness refused to answer, and the question was waived for the present.

The question next put, was this:—"Was any thing carried by the person who went with you to the magazine?" And here I think I can in no way convey to you so correct an impression of the character of this extraordinary trial, as by quoting the residue of the examination of Jackson, as reported by Mr. Cadwallader, of Lockport, and furnished

me by Judge Marcy. After the last mentioned question was put, the examination proceeded as follows:—

“Witness thinks there was; *don't recollect exactly what*; thinks he had a basket in his hand; don't recollect that he saw what was in it; it was covered up with a cloth or brown paper; did not see him carry a vessel with drink in it; does not recollect that he did so at any other time; witness thinks *he* did not carry a vessel containing drink towards the magazine; it was a small basket. The other man went up to the magazine; thinks he did not see that person go into the magazine. Witness had to go by the window to return; the man did not return with him; can't say positively that he saw him come back; saw him when he was within a few feet of the house; can't say whether he had the basket. At the magazine saw the man go towards the door of it; did not see any door unlocked; the outside door, which witness saw, he thinks was down, or partly opened; the person was a little ahead of him; did not see him enter; can't say positively but he did enter.

“Witness was next asked ‘if he heard the person with him speak to any person in the magazine?’ He objected to answering. The court decided that he must answer. Witness answered ‘he did;’ a person in the magazine replied: thinks he did not hear a noise before or at the time he stopped; don't recollect that the first he heard in the magazine was the above answer; don't recollect that the person on the outside called the one in the magazine by name; don't recollect that he spoke to him as one he already knew.

“To a question, ‘What was the conversation that passed between the person on the outside and the one on the inside?’ counsel for defendant objected, on the ground that defendant might be implicated by conversation to which he was not a party, or which was not held in his presence. The counsel for the people disclaimed any such intention: they did not wish witness to detail aught that would criminate defendant, unless he were present: they wished justice to be done, and nothing more. The court then instructed the witness not to repeat any conversation that would go to implicate defendant, unless it was held in his presence.

“Witness answers to question, that he ‘don't recollect:’ something was said: *most* forgets what: the import, to the best of his recollection, was ‘to clear, to be off.’ He “took the substance to be ‘clear out,’ *and he did clear out.*” Thinks the voice came from the magazine; he did not stay for an answer to be given; he dropped what he had and ran: he dropped a gun, a fowling-piece: got the fowling piece from Giddings: don't know that it was loaded: the person with him requested him to take it along: *took it for the purpose of going a hunting!* had before concluded to go to the installation, eight miles! put a bag on him to carry the game in! the person he went with said, ‘let us go a hunting.’ This was after breakfast. The voice witness heard caused him to run; it ‘scared him!’ thinks Giddings replied to

it ; don't recollect the substance of the reply, nor any part ; recollects the reply was very loud ; don't recollect that it was threatening ; the object of the reply might have been to order the man to be quiet ; can't be positive whether it was or was not ; his language might have been that of a man speaking in a commanding or threatening manner ; it is his impression that it was to induce silence on the part of the man in the magazine ; heard the voice, and then told his companion he would stay no longer, thinking it best to be off ; thinks the voice was as before stated ; don't think he staid to hear the reply of his companion ; was surprised to hear the voice from the magazine in *that manner* ; might not have been surprised if he had heard an accompanying voice ; it was the *manner* of the voice that induced him to run ; lodged at his friend's house the night before ; don't recollect a carriage coming to his house, nor near it, nor about it ; don't recollect *now* that any men came to the house that night ; he was told so ; had no knowledge of it. Witness before that time had been introduced to Colonel Jewett ; does not recollect that he saw him at the fort the evening previous, nor before he went to the installation ; in the morning the steam-boat was at the dock going to Lewiston ; Giddings's family was going up ; Giddings was the man he went with to the magazine ; believes the fort was left in care of Giddings ; when the troops went off, Giddings was left in charge of the fort, some time before September, 1836 ; at the time of the installation, Jewett resided at the mess house at the fort ; can't swear that he had charge of the fort at that time. Witness went to the installation in the forenoon ; thinks he saw defendant at Lewiston, and had conversation with him ; don't think he informed him of the noise ; had 'special orders' when he left Giddings ; heard a noise in the magazine before he went to Lewiston, it was a few minutes after the first time ; it was a human voice ; when he last heard the noise he was passing by the magazine to go to Lewiston ; had an errand to do there ; he was requested to inform certain persons there, that the man in the magazine was making a noise ; Edward Giddings gave him the errand ; witness did not communicate it to defendant at Lewiston, nor in his presence ; don't know that it came to Jewett's ear that the man was confined in the magazine, except by hearsay ; witness was requested to communicate his message to certain persons who were named ; more than one or two ; not to the whole installation ; not to the defendant, nor to any one living at Lewiston.

" Witness don't recollect that the man that went with him to the magazine had any weapon ; he spoke about a pistol ; he had a pistol ; don't know as it was loaded ; when near the magazine, the man spoke to the person in the magazine ; thinks he said, ' be still ; be quiet ; ' never recollected that any thing was said to the man in the inside about the pistol. Witness communicated his errand but to one person at Lewiston. When the man in the magazine said ' be off ! ' Giddings wanted witness to stop. The man that witness communicated his errand to at Lewiston, started to go to the fort.

" Cross-examined. Giddings at the house had a pistol ; can't say he saw it after they started."

Theodore F. Talbot and Bates Cooke were examined, as to the appearances of the magazine, in March, 1827, when it was visited by them, as a committee of examination. They described the strength of the apartment, and the marks of violence, as though some person had been confined therein, and made strong and violent exertions to force the way out.

A number of witnesses were introduced, among whom were Hiram Hubbard, Mrs. Hall, Corydon Fox, Mr. Perry, Robert Mollineaux, and most of those named on the former trials, proving the abduction, and all the particulars of the journey from Canandaigua to Niagara; but in looking over several columns of the testimony, I find no facts, not already mentioned, worthy of note.

William P. Daniels, was likewise called again upon this trial. He knew Solomon C. Wright; but on being asked if he was at Wright's house on the evening before the installation of the Lewiston Chapter,—(that is, when Morgan was brought thither in the close carriage, and guarded in the barn,)—he refused to answer the question, on the ground that it might implicate him in a more serious crime than that of a misdemeanor,—an indictment for the murder of Morgan, as an accessory before the fact. The court again explained the law, as in the instance of Turner's refusal; but the witness still refused to answer. He also, for the reason above given, declined answering the inquiries whether Eli Bruce, and Jeremiah Brown, were at Wright's on the occasion referred to. The court here again interposed, and emphatically remarked, that unless the witness was altogether certain, from evidence other than that generally known, that there was a murder committed, and that he would be in danger of being indicted for it, upon the knowledge afforded by his answer, he was guilty of perjury, in claiming the privilege. "It is, therefore," continued the court, "a question of perjury or not with you,—and



“remember, if the laws of man cannot reach you, the laws of God will!” The witness then replied:—“that he claimed his privilege only and directly upon the ground that his answer to the questions would, as he believed, implicate him in the murder of Morgan.” This, he answered, he said “under his oath, and with an understanding of the question.”

Daniels was then asked if he had seen Elihu Mather or Jeremiah Brown driving a closed carriage along the Ridge Road, on the 13th of September, 1826. He objected to answer, on the same ground as before. The court decided that he must answer the question. He then consulted his counsel, after which he replied—“no.” Being farther pressed, he replied that he now thinks he saw a close carriage pass, but does not know who drove it. Being asked if he knew that Eli Bruce was in that carriage, and pressed closely upon the question, he again consulted his counsel. He afterwards replied that he believed Eli Bruce was in the carriage. Being further pressed, he acknowledged that his belief was so strong that he had no doubt that Bruce was in the carriage. He was at the installation, but did not recollect seeing the defendant, (Jewett,) there. He *might* have talked with Jewett afterwards, about the confinement of Morgan in the magazine.

Hiram B. Hopkins, the former deputy of Bruce, was likewise sworn. In addition to the circumstances testified by him on the former trials, he now disclosed the fact, that when he was exalted to the Royal Arch degree, in the month of August preceding the abduction, he was informed after taking the obligation, of the intention of Morgan to disclose all their secrets. He was told that means would be taken to suppress the book, and he was charged “to govern himself accordingly.”

A great number of additional witnesses were examined, to prove a variety of corroborating facts and circumstan-

ces of the case, which it would be a waste of time to enumerate. It was proved that the defendant was the person in charge of the fort and public property, at the time of Morgan's confinement; but the prevarications and refusals to answer, of the most important witnesses, whose testimony, if honestly given, would beyond a doubt have established the direct and positive guilt of the defendant, left the case deficient in affirmative testimony sufficient to warrant a legal conviction. It will be seen by the sketch I have presented, that whenever a question was put, bearing hard upon the conspirators, it was either evaded, or, after consultations with counsel, not answered at all, on the ground of privilege.

The cause was summed up by Messrs. White and Barnard for the defendant, and Messrs. Whiting and Birdseye for the people.

I have been obligingly furnished by Judge Marcy with the notes of his charge to the jury in this case, and regret that I have not leisure to transcribe it for your perusal. The judge said it was an important cause, but derived its importance less from the immediate consequences in which it might involve the defendant, or the specific nature of the offence imputed to him, than from the very extraordinary transaction which it has been necessary to disclose. The court did not think it necessary, after six days of anxious application, to recapitulate the whole examination; and as to most of the points of law, the judge said he had expressed his opinions, in the hearing of the jury, in the progress of the trial. He had been anxious to give, and in his judgment had given the prosecution the benefit of all the rules of law that could aid in developing the facts involved in this transaction, tending in any way to show in a legal manner, the defendant's participation in the abduction of Morgan. But, while it was of vast importance to us all, that action and energy should be given to our system, to which we owe

the security of life and property, yet there are rules for the benefit of those who may be unfortunately involved in a false charge for crimes—rules for the safety of innocence. The most important of all these rules for the accused, is the obtaining of an impartial jury. Upon this point great pains had been taken; and as that matter had been submitted to the court, he had endeavored to admit no person upon the panel, who was not wholly indifferent to the question of the guilt or innocence of the defendant. The indictment to be tried was for falsely imprisoning Morgan, and conspiring to imprison and carry him to parts unknown. There was no evidence to sustain either charge, unless the jury should be satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt, that Morgan was in Fort Niagara. But no sort of connexion between the defendant and those who took Morgan away from Canandaigua, or those who had transported him through that county, had been shown. In order to bring the charge home to the defendant, it must be shown that Morgan was actually confined in the fort, and that the defendant had some agency in bringing him there, and confining him. Or, if the defendant knew of his confinement while it existed, and had command of the place where he was confined, and did not interfere in any manner for his relief, it would be a just inference of guilt.

The jury retired at about 11 o'clock on the evening of the fifth day of the trial, and returned in a few moments with a verdict of "NOT GUILTY."

I am, sir, &c.

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#### LETTER XLI.

NEW-YORK, March 23, 1832.

SIR,

The court proceeded immediately with the trial of Solomon C. Wright and Jeremiah Brown, both of whom

had been indicted for the misdemeanor of Morgan's abduction. Wright, it will be remembered, was the keeper of the tavern at the junction of the road from Lockport, with the Ridge Road—the house at which the kidnappers halted so long, until Bruce joined them in the evening. A large party of Masons, as it has repeatedly been mentioned, assembled at his house on that occasion. After a late supper, they proceeded towards Lewiston, with the closed carriage, which had been driven into Wright's barn, and kept guarded, until their departure. The first witnesses examined, as in most of the preceding trials, were the jailor and his wife, from Canandaigua, and others, proving the abduction and night journey to Hanford's Landing, and the passage of the closed carriage along the Ridge Road to Wright's. Hiram Hubbard's testimony was of the same forgetful and dogged character as that heretofore given by the same witness.

David Maxwell, the keeper of the turnpike gate near by, proved some mysterious conduct of Wright, at the time the carriage stopped at his house. Brown, the other defendant, was also abundantly identified, by various witnesses, as one of the persons with the carriage, at Wright's, and afterwards at Mollineaux's, where Bruce procured a change of horses. Brown drove the carriage.

Mahala Farwell, who had testified to little purpose on the trial of Jewett, now made some admissions, respecting the absence of her husband, which, though not bearing directly upon the case in hand, disclosed another instance of the activity of the accused and their friends, in preventing the attendance of witnesses. Her husband was believed to be an important witness; but although they had always lived happily together, yet about three years ago, just before the holding of a court, he had left her. The belief was, that he had been hired to abandon his wife for the time being, and remain absent, until the affair should be over.

John Jackson was again sworn as a witness on the present trial, and his testimony varied considerably in several essential particulars, from what it was on a former trial. It will be recollected that he accompanied Giddings to the magazine, on the morning of the 14th of September, 1826. According to his present testimony, he took a gun, when they went to the magazine, and Giddings *had* a pistol, but he did not see him *take* a pistol. He did not take any ammunition, and knew not that the musket was loaded. When Giddings went up to the magazine, witness remained sixty or seventy feet off. He heard a man in the magazine, as Giddings approached, saying "be off." The voice was loud, and witness dropped his gun and walked off pretty lively, because he was frightened, and thought it best to be off. Witness did not recollect that Giddings mentioned the name of Morgan; but he, (witness) was sent up to Lewiston, where the Masons were proceeding with the installation, with instructions to tell Col. King, and David Hague, that the man in the magazine was making a noise, and they must come down. As he departed for Lewiston, in passing the magazine he again heard the man making a noise. He could hear his voice, but not the words—might have heard him say "O dear!"

A sister-in-law of Wright's, named Hannah Farnsworth, who cooked the supper for the party on the evening of the 13th of September, was now called as a witness. Great pains had been taken to procure her attendance on the other trials, for three years previously, but without success. On her present examination, nothing was elicited of importance. She did not recollect any circumstance, implicating any person whatever. Indeed she said "she did not feel particularly called upon to recollect!" William P. Daniels was likewise again sworn upon this trial. After having admitted that he saw Bruce pass on the Ridge Road with the closed carriage, at about 11 o'clock on the night of the

13th,—he was asked—did you see Jeremiah Brown?  
Ans. "Can't say that I did or did not." The court objected to this mode of answering the question, and required of him to tell what he meant by "can't say." The witness replied that he did not see him [Brown] on the Ridge Road: and again, "supposed he did: believed he did: had no doubt it was the man now in court." He did not recollect whether Brown drove the carriage or not. He was not told by Bruce that Morgan was in the carriage; but "before the abduction he *might* have heard the subject discussed by individuals, and he *might* have heard it spoken of at Batavia!" The reporter of this trial,\* a copy of which has also been furnished me by the Judge who presided, as being in general correct, remarks, in regard to this witness:—"We never heard a witness answer questions with more reluctance than this man Daniels, and we never wish to see another like exhibition in a court of justice, of a struggle for mastery between the influence of the "Masons, and those of the whole community."

A conversation was proved by Daniel Pomeroy, between Col. King and another man, to the following effect. Witness lived in the western part of the town of Lockport, and attended the installation at Lewiston. He arrived at that place on the preceding evening, and took supper with Col. King and others, at the "Frontier House." While there, that evening, witness was introduced to a stranger, from Rochester, whose name he did not now recollect. Witness heard the stranger say to King, that some person would be there that night. King and the stranger then walked to another part of the house, and were engaged in conversation. The witness walked up to them afterwards, and heard the stranger say, as he came up to them—"He will be here to-night." He did not recollect that the name of Morgan

\* Mr. Gadwallader, editor of the Lockport Balance.

was mentioned in connexion with that remark, but the subject of Morgan's book was immediately introduced, and the stranger observed, "two or three degrees were written," or "published," (witness did not recollect which;) but King replied that "*he would take care of him.*" King knew that witness was a Mason.

The next witness examined was Theodore F. Talbot, Esq., with whose name you must long since have become familiar, as one of the most active members of the celebrated Lewiston Committee of investigation. Talbot's examination was made in reference to a conversation which he had had with one of the defendants, (Wright,) in March, 1827. Witness was then on a tour of investigation along the Ridge Road, and called on Wright to request information of such circumstances as might be in his possession, or within his knowledge. It must be here borne in mind, that Wright himself had been examined as a witness, on the trial of Whitney and Gillis, and had then sworn that he knew nothing in particular of the mysterious carriage which arrived at his house on the afternoon of the 13th of September; or of the carriage being driven into the barn; or of any particular reason for the assemblage of so many people at his house, on that occasion; or of the arrival of Bruce there that evening. Very different was that testimony from the admissions made by him to Talbot, in March, 1827. Mr. Talbot's examination as to that conversation with Wright, was long and particular—from which it appeared that to most of the questions he had put to Wright, he made evasive replies, or gave no explanations at all. He admitted that the carriage was driven to his house, at the time specified, but did not admit that Jeremiah Brown was with it, although he said Brown sometimes passed that way. But the circumstance of the curtains being closed down, gave him no surprise. The collection of so many people at his house, excited no attention.

Wright admitted to witness, that the fact of the singular circumstances under which the carriage arrived, and the fact that it was not driven up to the door, as was usual with carriages, had excited some suspicions in the public mind, but not with him. In answer to the question why they drove the carriage into the barn, on so clear a night, when there was a convenient shed, he replied that people sometimes chose to have their carriages put in safe places. He also had informed the witness in that conversation, *that he had himself opened the barn-doors, to admit the carriage, and that he unhitched the horses from the carriage with his own hands.* When asked why, inasmuch as he kept a hostler to take that part of the labor, he had left his bar, where there was a crowd of people, to perform these offices himself—and why, when he had met the hostler coming to the barn with provender, he took it from him, to feed the horses himself, he gave no explanations whatever, nor did he attempt to deny the facts. When asked if he did not think it strange that travellers should have supped at his house, and taken their departure thence at such a late hour, he replied that travellers had a right to do as they pleased, and he did not feel hurt about it. He told witness that the carriage returned about sun-rise the next morning—he did not know the driver, but admitted that Jeremiah Brown was in the carriage. But he had not asked Brown any questions. He admitted that when the carriage was driven away in the night, it did not come up to the steps to take in the passengers, and he admitted that he saw it drive away. Loton Lawson had been there at about that time—probably coming from the west, the first or second day after the installation. I have given a very brief epitome of this examination, but it embraces all that is essential to the case, and in the principal facts, the defendant's admissions and declarations, soon after the outrage, were directly in con-



tradition to his testimony as given on the trial of Whitney and Gillis.

A witness who was in the employ of the defendant, Wright, testified, in substance, that he came in from work rather earlier than usual on the evening in question, and found a large collection of people at the house ;—most of them had sticks, which he thought very large ones to walk with. Soon after he came in, he saw a movement, when the whole company mounted their horses, and rode off on the Ridge Road eastwardly ;—Wright did not go with them, but some one rode his horse. In about ten or twenty minutes afterwards, witness being up stairs, the company returned, and as he thought there was an unusual bustle, he went down, to see what they were about. He saw them driving the carriage into the barn. The entrance was high and difficult, and several persons took hold of the wheels and body to thrust it in. The doors were then closed upon it. There was much of whispering among the people, in which Wright bore a part. Brown, the other defendant, was also among them when they returned, and he heard him declare to somebody—"it was a tedious job." They took supper there : Bruce was amongst them, with Orsamus Turner, the printer, of Lockport. The witness retired to bed before the company departed, and he knew nothing further that was material to the case.

Hiram B. Hopkins, David C. Miller, and a number of other witnesses, were examined by the prosecution, but their evidence was not material, and the prosecution rested.

The testimony offered by the defence had little to do with the case, any farther than that the characters of both defendants were shown to have been unexceptionable. Indeed the counsel for the prosecution admitted this fact, arguing therefrom, the evil tendency of the masonic institution, since, by its influence, such men had been involved in

these breaches of the law. The witnesses examined to other points, were, 1st. James B. Lay, of Batavia. He was present at Danold's tavern, on the morning of September 11, when Morgan was arrested and carried away to Canandaigua; but he saw no violence, although he observed considerable excitement. 2d. Johnson Goodwill, also of Batavia. He testified to the particulars of an interview with Morgan, on Sunday, the 10th, when the latter voluntarily introduced the subject of the book he was preparing. He said he had been persuaded into the undertaking by Miller, Davids, and Dyer, who had promised to supply him with money, but had not done so. They had not treated him well. He had undertaken the work on account of his poverty, because he had no means of obtaining a living; and he would even then gladly relinquish and suppress it, if he could get back his manuscripts. He had attempted to do this, but Miller, he said, would not give them up. Morgan expressed, very anxiously, a desire to be altogether rid of Miller, and the witness offered him an asylum, with his family, at his own house. He also assured Morgan that if he was so poor, there would be no difficulty in providing means for his support, provided he would get back his manuscripts, and stop the work. In regard to his difficulties with Miller and Davids, Morgan said to witness, he had written them a sharp note, which he was apprehensive was so much in the form of a challenge that they might take the advantage of him, by instituting a prosecution. The third witness for the defence, was William R. Thomson, sheriff of Genesee, at the time of Morgan's arrest. He corroborated the testimony of the last witness, respecting the difficulties that existed between Morgan and Miller, and the strong desire manifested by the former to get entirely clear from the latter. The defence was rested here.

Messrs. Griffin and Barnard summed up for the defendants, and Messrs. Birdseye and Whiting for the people,

Judge Marcy charged the jury with great clearness and impartiality, and the cause was submitted to the jury at the close of the fourth day of the trial. The jury remained out thirty-six hours, and then came into court with a verdict of "NOT GUILTY"—to the astonishment alike of the Bench, the Bar, and the People. There is not—there cannot be, a particle of doubt, that both of the defendants were concerned in the abduction, though not as principals. They knew that Morgan was a free citizen under constraint,—held under such constraint without legal process,—and they were not only assenting to his being thus held in duress, but were aiding and assisting.

It was understood that ten of the jurors were for convicting the defendants ; but the two obstinate members solemnly declared that they would stay out and die, before they would consent to a verdict of guilty ; and the ten accommodating gentlemen yielded. While this jury was out, a Mason was detected in conveying provisions, wrapped in a cloak, to the two "faithful" members. He was arraigned before the court, and promptly punished.

Just upon the heel of this trial, came out in the Anti-masonic papers, another of those terrific tales of masonic murder, which had previously been interspersed between the legal transactions so frequently occurring in the progress of Anti-masonry. It is a story of which I hardly know what to make. That it was a masonic murder, perpetrated in the same spirit with that which projected and executed the outrage upon Morgan, I am most unwilling—nay, I cannot believe ;—and yet, there are most unpleasant features in the narrative. The story is substantially this :—A Mr. Lemuel De Forest, said to be a well known and respectable inhabitant of the county of Livingston, published a deposition embracing the following extraordinary statement. In the summer and autumn of 1809, Mr. De Forest lived in Albany, where he became acquainted with a man by the name

of Loring Simonds, a sash-maker by trade, and who had been in the army. He was in the employ of Mr. Lucas Hooghkerk, a respectable master-builder, in Albany. Simonds, in the course of his familiar conversations with De Forest, informed him that when he came to Albany, he had fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars, which he entrusted to some masonic friends,—a firm,—which failed soon afterwards, and took the benefit of the act without paying or securing to him the amount of a shilling. In revenge for being thus swindled, by his brethren, he determined to reveal the secrets of the masonic order, and he proposed to instruct the deponent, De Forest, in the mysteries. They were in the habit of meeting upon this subject, in an old uninhabited house, in Van Schaick-street, near the two-steepled church. Simonds had taken three degrees, all of which he was teaching to his friend De Forest. On one of these occasions, Simonds had expressed an apprehension that he might lose his life for what he was doing; but the remark was made rather sportively, and it passed off. After some time had elapsed, on a Friday afternoon, when they were in the old building, unobserved, as both supposed, Simonds being engaged in giving him some illustrations of Masonry, on a sudden a man by the name of Webb, an Englishman of about fifty years of age, known to both as a Mason, came warily up stairs, and exclaimed as he pointed at the teacher of De Forest,—“*Simonds, you villain! You are a perjured wretch: I have caught you in the very act: IF I SHOULD CATCH YOU IN THE DARK, I SHOULD BE NONE TOO GOOD TO PUT A KNIFE INTO YOU!*” Saying this, he turned upon his heel and disappeared. Both parties were of course startled at the surprise; but Simonds trembled like an aspen leaf. His countenance changed to an ashy paleness, and he staggered back to a seat. A pause of a few moments ensued, when he said—“Well: I will not give it up so;” and after another short interval of silent astonishment,

they separated. On the very next morning, at about 10 o'clock, word was brought to De Forest that his friend was dying at a gambling house in the Colonie,—now the fifth ward of Albany. He hastened thither, and found Simonds in the agonies of death;—there was a rattling in his throat, and green frothy matter was discharging from his mouth and nose in copious quantities. While De Forest was there, some eight or ten persons came in, and among them a physician, who, after feeling his pulse, remarked that his case was hopeless, and departed. Simonds died in the afternoon, and a few friends made up a contribution for his burial. No coroner's inquest sat upon his body; his remains were taken home to his house in Van Schaick-street; and interred on the following day, by the eight or ten persons before referred to. Mr. Hooghkirk, his employer, superintended the arrangements for the funeral, and was himself a high and active Freemason. The character of Simonds was good, and he left a wife and two or three small children. Such is the story, as solemnly sworn to by a respectable citizen. Mr. De Forest likewise declares that he has never entertained a doubt of his friend having been murdered by the Masons, for making the disclosures referred to. And those disclosures, he adds, were in perfect agreement with Morgan's illustrations.

The Anti-masons seized upon this tale as greedily as they had done upon that of Miller, heretofore related; but it did not make so deep an impression, or cause so lively an excitement. The most remarkable feature of the tale is the coincidence between his own previously expressed apprehension of evil; the discovery and threat of Webb; and the sudden and violent death occurring immediately afterwards. But this coincidence might very well have been caused by the threat, and the foreboding. The operation of fear, might have suddenly disordered his mind. Such a result is not only physically possible, but physically proba-

ble ; and while in this situation he most likely used the means of self-destruction. There is yet another circumstance : *he was at a gambling house*. Perhaps he had spent his last shilling : nay, his sixteen hundred dollars might have been lost by play. If so, what more natural, or common, than that he should have preferred, in a moment of wretchedness and despair, to face death than a destitute wife and children ! Simonds, beyond a doubt, died  
A SUICIDE !

I am, sir, very truly yours.

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## LETTER XLII.

NEW-YORK, March 25, 1832.

SIR,

There were several transactions in the year 1830, which, though not exactly forming a part of the Morgan history, are nevertheless entitled to notice, since they forcibly exhibit the spirit by which Freemasonry was actuated, in all cases where the supposed rights of the craft were concerned, or its rites and mysteries made the subject of legal investigation. During the most feverish state of the Anti-masonic excitement, a newspaper had been established at Rochester, the avowed object of which was to vindicate the Masons from the aspersions, as they were called, of their antagonists, and to oppose the Anti-masons at all points. This paper, which was conducted with more of flippancy and smartness, than talent, was excessively virulent in its course, and during the period that Mr. Spencer discharged the duty of special counsel, he was the standing subject of its bitterest invective. The paper was established by masonic contributions, and patronised almost exclusively by them. The cause of the persons in-

dicted for the conspiracy, was warmly espoused by it, and they were represented as innocent and persecuted men. On the conviction of John Whitney, the jury was grossly libelled by this paper—(The Craftsman)—for which libel the editor was promptly indicted: “He was tried on this indictment in January, 1830, when the jury could not agree on their verdict. It was afterwards ascertained that the disagreement proceeded from four Masons who were on the jury. He was again tried in June, 1830, when he did not even call a witness to prove the libels he had published, and he was convicted without hesitation, and fined fifty dollars. The history of this case is introduced in consequence of its connexion with the main trials, and to exhibit one of the instances of the operation of masonic feeling in the jury box.”

The trial of Calvin Cook *vs.* Harvey Cook at Fort Ann, in Washington county, N. Y., in June, 1830, before Benjamin Copeland, Esq., a magistrate of that town, will perhaps illustrate still more clearly, and more unfortunately, the influence of masonic obligations upon men who attach an undue importance to the institution. The controversy grew out of the Anti-masonic excitement. The parties were cousins, and were both Masons—the former had seceded, and the latter adhered. The unpleasant feelings first engendered by this controversy, resulted in open feuds. A succession of outrages were committed upon the doors and machinery of the plaintiff's mills, which were directly charged upon the defendant. He was importuned by his relative to desist, but is said to have replied that “he (defendant) should not wonder if plaintiff's house were burnt over his head, unless he seceded back from Anti-masonry.” A repetition of the trespass having occurred, after the admonition and threat, an action was instituted for the recovery of damages, for the various acts of violence attributed to the defendant.

The county of Washington had been, for a long time previously, infected with Anti-masonry ; and the parties ranged themselves on this trial with as much apparent zeal and bitterness, as on the trials in the west.

A jury having been summoned, Erastus Day was challenged by the plaintiff for favor, on the broad ground of his masonic obligations. This was overruled, and he was then challenged for cause, and triers appointed. The proposed juror, being sworn, was asked if he was a Mason. He refused, at first, to answer the question ; but being admonished by the court, testified that he was, and that he had taken seventeen degrees. Being interrogated as to various points of obligation in the masonic oaths, he again refused to answer ; and at length told the magistrate that he considered his masonic oaths superior to the oaths he had just taken before the court ! Sylvester Cone, the next witness, resolutely refused, at first, even to be sworn. He finally consented, however, at the solicitation of his friends ; but to questions touching the secrets of the order he firmly refused to reply ; and to those to which he answered, his replies were dogged and reluctant. The same unwillingness is said to have been manifested by five other witnesses who were Freemasons.

The plaintiff then called Messrs. William Brayton, Benjamin Seeley, and Nathaniel Colver, who, it is presumed, were seceding masons, and some of whom testified that in the Royal Arch Oath, among the keeping of secrets, *murder and treason were not excepted* ; and that the members of the fraternity were required to help each other out of difficulty, right or wrong ; and also to promote their political preferment.

The report of the trial from which my information respecting this case is principally drawn, and which should probably be received with some grains of allowance, proceeds to state, as follows:



"Several circumstances transpired during this trial, to illustrate the peculiar nature of the masonic fraternity, and their dread of investigation. Every Mason, sworn or called as a witness, seemed unusually anxious to give *his opinion*, that there was nothing wrong in Masonry, and that there was nothing wrong in the oaths, which *he thought* ought to disqualify a man from sitting as a juror; and they seemed grieved to the heart, that they should not be allowed to crowd *their opinions* down the throats of the triers, as indubitable evidence. But when called upon to let the triers have the plain undisguised facts about Masonry, or masonic oaths, they were as silent as the grave. While on the other hand, the other witnesses seemed unwilling to express any opinion, but wished to state the facts, and let the triers have them, upon which to judge. On the second day, Mr. Colver was called as a witness, and cross-examined by Mr. Gibbs. He was asked, 'did you ever take an oath which you *supposed* would bias you as a juror?' He replied, 'I will tell you what oath I did take, and the triers may judge of it themselves; I took an oath in these very words'—— Here he was stopped by the counsel, saying, 'I don't want the oath, I want your *opinion*, whether you *supposed* the oath would bias you as a juror?' Mr. Colver said, if the court decided he should give an opinion to the triers, he would give it with pleasure; otherwise he was unwilling to obtrude any opinion upon them, but would state the facts, and the points in the oath, and let the triers form their own opinion. But Mr. Gibbs urged the question; the counsel for the plaintiff withdrew his objection, and Mr. Colver answered, 'I did take an oath, which, upon reflection, I was satisfied was designed, and directly calculated to set the laws of God and man at defiance.' Mr. Gibbs did not ask for a second opinion."

Much feeling was evident during the trial, and that of not the most pleasant description. At times there was an exhibition of passion on the part of the sticklers for Freemasonry, and a degree of sensitiveness, really surprising, when we consider the comparative unimportance of the occasion. Frequently the proceedings were interrupted by the intrusiveness of the friends of the defendant, and the witnesses were openly and repeatedly told not to answer the questions. The court, also, was chided for allowing such questions to be put. But it is needless to particularize all the embarrassments that were thrown in the way of the proceedings. After the examinations were ended, the question as to the competency of the juror, on the score of impartiality, was summed up on both sides, and was

thereupon submitted to the triers under a charge from the court. After mature deliberation, the triers returned with the decision that Erastus Day did not stand indifferent to the parties litigant, *and he was rejected from the jury.*

When the trial had proceeded for some time, a question of title became involved in the cause, which at once took it from the magistrate's jurisdiction; and there, so far as I am informed, the matter ended.

This trial, though unconnected with the Morgan business, was yet one of the fruits of the Anti-masonic excitement, and though unimportant in its results as to the parties immediately concerned, was nevertheless far from being unimportant, in its bearing upon the masonic institution. It appeared but too clearly from the testimony, that the Masons in Washington county, have taken their obligations in their worst forms,—I mean as they have been altered for the worse, by ignorant and designing men, without the sanction of the higher bodies to which the lodges and chapters owe obedience. It was also proved, beyond contradiction, that where the obligations resting upon Freemasons, have been so given, so received, and so understood, by its votaries, they may very frequently, and very materially, interfere with the impartial and due administration of the laws. It was on this occasion asserted, and I have never heard the assertion contradicted, that the Masons present on the trial held their obligations to be paramount to the laws of the land; and even had the hardihood not only to set at defiance, but to brave the court in terms;—and when solemnly sworn to answer such questions as should be put to them, refused peremptorily to answer at all!

Under all the circumstances of the case, I am constrained to admit, that the juror in the foregoing cause was properly rejected; and every Freemason who has taken the oaths as the Masons at Fort Ann seem to have done, and who regards them in the same sense, and holds them in the

same estimation of superiority to the civil law, may justly be considered as having disqualified himself from sitting as an impartial juror, where his masonic brethren are on trial.

The next movement of the Anti-masonic party was purely political. A governor, lieutenant governor, and members of Congress were to be elected, together with senators and representatives of the state legislature. For the purpose of nominating candidates for the two former offices, and making general preparations for the contest through the counties, another Anti-masonic State Convention was held at Utica, on the 11th of August, 1830. Forty-five counties were represented by one hundred and eleven delegates—constituting in all respects a very intelligent and respectable body. Francis Granger was once more nominated for governor, and Samuel Stevens, of New-York, for the second office. Mr. Granger had been previously nominated by a primary meeting of the National Republicans of Suffolk county, for the same station; and both nominations were of a character so entirely unexceptionable, that the great body of the National Republican party felt disposed to give them a cordial and hearty support. With the National Republicans, whose attention was directed to the maintenance of the great fundamental principles of the federal constitution, now believed to be in imminent peril, and with whom state politics were consequently of but minor consideration, the question of Masonry or Anti-masonry, was looked upon as of very little comparative importance. So that the honor of the nation, and the federal constitution, could be preserved, untarnished and unbroken, with a party which was contending for principle, without regard to personal considerations, it was a matter of but small moment, whether the state officers were Freemasons, or their opponents. No other persons, therefore, were nominated in opposition to the candidates of the friends of General Jackson's administration; and a confident hope of success was indulged by

the friends of the union ticket. But these hopes were not realized. In the western country, where Anti-masonry first sprang into existence, and where it had taken the deepest root, the united friends of Mr. Granger carried every thing before them. The holyday legions of the Persians were not more completely routed by the phalanxes of the impetuous Macedonian, than were the partizans of Governor Throop, and the friends of General Jackson, in the country west of the Cayuga. In the western senatorial district, the vote for the National Republican and Anti-masonic candidates, was more than two to one. Mr. Granger crossed the Hudson, coming east, with a majority of 1400. But in proportion as Anti-masonry had become purely political, so had Freemasonry, from the mere fact of feeling itself persecuted and oppressed, become in a measure political also; and as it was impossible to make the whole public perceive that considerations of national importance were involved in what was wholly a state election, thousands and thousands of the National Republicans who yet adhered to Freemasonry in the central counties, cast their votes for the Jackson candidates,—not from any affection for those candidates, or from approbation of their principles,—but from strong unmingled hatred to Anti-masonry. The result was fatal to the candidates in opposition. Instead of polling, jointly, as we might well have done, 132,000 votes, our candidates received only 120,000, and a fraction; while the numbers of our opponents were swelled by our own political friends, to the number of 128,000 and upwards. Of the number, 120,000, received by Mr. Granger, it is a fair allowance to say that 75,000 were the votes of real Antimasons. This result was greatly to be deplored by the National Republican party, from more considerations than a simple defeat. It gave their opponents an artificial appearance of strength, well calculated to draw over to them the selfish and the wavering, whose business it is to watch

the political tides, and whose practice is to float with the popular current. It also had the further effect of strengthening our opponents, by the accession of all those whose principles sit lightly upon them, and who, having once voted with that party, might easily be induced to suppose it would redound to their ultimate interest to continue with their new associates.

The case of the Cooks, related in the earlier part of the present letter, is not the only transaction connected with the Anti-masonic question, and deserving of note, which occurred in that section of the state in the year 1830. A few weeks previously to the election just spoken of, the public were surprised by a statement from the north, of another masonic outrage, which, but for a seemingly special interposition of Providence, would have been still further aggravated by an atrocious murder! The story was, that an attempt had been made upon the life of a respectable clergyman, by the name of Witherell, (who had renounced the order of Freemasonry,) by his offended brethren of the "mystic tie." In the first instance, few if any persons in this section of the state, were disposed to give credence to the tale. The death of Morgan, for having revealed the secrets of the order, was not doubted; but so many persons had renounced their connexion with the institution subsequently to that event, and the boasted secrets were so universally known, by all who had had sufficient curiosity to inquire into them, that the possibility of another masonic outrage, for such a cause, had not been thought of. Nevertheless, the story was greedily caught up by the Anti-masons, and the best use made of it, to promote their cause during the election; while the opposite party was equally active in discountenancing the narration, either as a fiction, or an imposture. The publications were so numerous, violent and contradictory, that, for one,—and I believe I was not alone in my doubts,—I knew not what to

make of the affair. If the relation was true, it was a very serious matter : if false, no ordinary punishment would have been too severe for the authors of the falsehood. It was evident, however, from the conduct of the adhering Masons who were acting politically with the administration party, that there was some foundation for the tale ; and among other devices for counteracting its influence upon the election, the report of a formal trial was got up and published throughout the state, minute in all its relations of time, place, circumstances, the names of parties, witnesses, &c., in which it appeared to have been proved that the whole story of the outrage was a fabrication, or that it had been committed by some member of the Elder's own family, probably with the knowledge of the whole. Before the polls had closed, however, the fact was disclosed that this reported trial, in all its details, was in itself a deliberate forgery ! There were, nevertheless, some subsequent legal proceedings in the premises, of a very extraordinary character, a full report of which, of formidable length, was published by a committee of the citizens of Washington county, early in the year 1831. Still, this publication was considered altogether *ex parte* ; it was too long for general perusal ; and made but little impression upon the public mind. For myself I yet knew not what to believe ; but as the case was one coming within the scope of my present investigations, I resolved to probe it to the bottom. With this view I addressed a letter some weeks since, to a distinguished and valued friend, residing in the neighborhood where the transactions were said to have taken place, for such an account of the strange and yet mysterious affair, as might be fully depended upon. The following ample letter reached me a few days since, in answer to my inquiries. I submit it to your consideration, with the fullest assurance that my correspondent is a man of the strictest integrity, and the most scrupulous veracity :—

"In answering your request to communicate to you 'all I know' in relation to the alledged outrage upon the family of Elder George Witherell, I have to remark, that it is a long story, and a minute detail would weary both you and myself. Your request implies a doubt of the truth of the history of that transaction, and the circumstances growing out of it, already before the public. How shall I assure myself that my narration will be thought entitled to more credit? At the same time, I feel that the request has been made in the sincere desire to learn the truth, and it implies also a friendly confidence in the source to which you have applied for information. Under the influence of the feelings prompted by these reflections, I have resolved to attempt a compliance. The task truly is somewhat formidable, and its execution, while it dissipates your doubts, will excite your astonishment and may exhaust your patience.

"You inquire who is Mr. Witherell? It is a pertinent question, and deserves a specific answer. He is a Baptist elder; and for the last ten or twelve years has presided over the Baptist church in the town of Hartford. In that station, he has, during all this time, been a faithful and respectable minister of the gospel, administering its ordinances, and teaching its doctrines to a numerous and intelligent community of christians. Hartford is a rich agricultural town, in this county, and Elder Witherell's society consisted principally of its farmers, distinguished for their sobriety, religious devotion and industrious habits. In this town, are two small villages, distant about a mile from each other. In one of them the Elder's church is located, near which he resides. In the other village, there is a Presbyterian church. In both, is the ordinary number of professional gentlemen, justices, pettifoggers and constables, with a competent provision of stores, taverns and mechanic's shops. Here, too, is a masonic lodge. The members of the Baptist church being principally farmers, lived dispersed through the town, at some distance from the village, while *their* inhabitants belonged to no particular denomination of christians. There were the clerks, bar-tenders, ostlers and apprentices. I state these circumstances, because I think they contain important testimony, furnishing some explanation of an extraordinary transaction, still shrouded in mystery and darkness. A large portion of these villagers were, and still are, members of the masonic fraternity, and among them were some of the leading members of the Baptist church. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising, that Elder Witherell yielded to the same inducements which have led so many clergymen of our country, to seek light and knowledge in the lodge. He became a Mason,—and not discovering the anticipated revelations in the lower degrees, he pressed forward to detect those that were concealed in the higher. He advanced to the degree of Knight Templar, and as you may reasonably suppose, was cherished and caressed by the lay members, as a worthy and accepted brother.

"This was the relation in which Elder Witherell stood, to the community in which he lived, when the story of the abduction and murder of Morgan, astonished the public by its boldness and atrocity, and directed its inquiries to the constitution and character of Freemasonry. The Baptist denomination of christians in our country, have been foremost in subjecting Freemasonry to the test of religious discipline. A large majority of Mr. Witherell's church knew, indeed, that their pastor was a Mason, but knew nothing of Masonry, save from its recent developments at the west, and the publications of the day. They called upon their elder to aver or deny their truth. Like most other Masons, whose consciences have been awakened to the subject, he hesitated between the responsibilities of his masonic obligations and association, and the convictions of religious duty. He proposed to abstain from any further communications with the lodge, but asked to be excused for the present, from a more decided renunciation. With such evidence before them of the character of the institution as recent events furnished, this did not satisfy his church. In the mean time, the neighboring Masons, both in and out of his church, were apprised of what was going on, and made a vigorous rally to support their brother in the conflict to which he was exposed. They offered to add two hundred dollars to the stipend paid him by his church, and to make good that stipend, should it be withdrawn, or he be dismissed by his congregation. The reward offered, (to give it no harsher name,) was raised by contribution, bearing the names of some of the county officials, residing more than ten miles distant, and who, far from being Baptists, seldom visited any church. The character of the transaction, as well as that of the contributors, fortifies the assertion, that the object was to sustain Masonry, rather than to support a christian minister. They were more anxious that the Elder should maintain his fellowship with the lodge than with the church.

"But, finally, after a severe mental conflict, a sense of duty prevailed over considerations of interest, and the Elder publicly renounced Freemasonry and forfeited the pecuniary reward. His masonic apostacy instantly exposed the Elder to the usual privations and disabilities. He encountered at once, the most active and vindictive resentments and persecutions of the entire masonic fraternity, of his own and the adjoining towns. They withdrew their subscription and their fellowship—stigmatized him as 'a fool,' for having forfeited such pecuniary advantages; and as a 'perjured scoundrel,' for having violated his masonic obligations.

"It was immediately given out by the most prominent Masons of the village, '*that Elder Witherell could not reside there;*' and so far as personal abuse, threats and intimidations could prevail, they seemed resolved to fulfil their own prediction.

"In this uncomfortable posture of affairs, in the casual absence of the Elder, on the 27th of September, 1830, at or about the hour of midnight,



two men disguised in masks, with a dark lantern, armed with a dirk-cane, or long knife, so polished as to reflect the light, entered the Elder's house, wandered from one door to another, leading to the chamber and adjoining rooms, and shortly entered the bed room of Mrs. Witherell. One instantly seized her by the throat, and while seeming to make a pass at her head with the other hand, exclaimed, '*you damned perjured scoundrel, you shall suffer the penalties of your obligations.*' The other, holding the dark lantern, and the knife or dirk, presented the light to the bed. They immediately left the house, on discovering that the Elder was absent. They wore no hats, and their disguises appeared like black silk handkerchiefs, tied over their faces and heads. Mrs. Witherell was at this time, alone, with her family of small children, the eldest of whom, George R. Witherell, a lad then about fourteen years of age, slept in an adjoining room; on hearing the exclamation in his mother's bed room, he sprang from his bed, terrified and cried out, 'father have you come home! father have you come home!' You ask me, if I believe that this outrage was actually committed? I answer, that the evidence and circumstances of the case do not admit of a rational doubt. The facts already stated, it is true, depend, of necessity, upon the testimony of Mrs. Witherell and her son, whose veracity had never before been questioned, and cannot, now, be impeached. It will here be remembered, that the Masons themselves, had already borne ample testimony to the good reputation of the Elder and his family, by their great exertions to retain him in their service. But there were independent circumstances proved by other witnesses, which cannot lie, and which remove all doubt, if any existed. The boy immediately alarmed the neighborhood, and a Mr. Smith and Mrs. Chase came in. It was a rainy night, muddy foot-steps were distinctly imprinted upon the floor and traceable from the house, and the track of a waggon could also be followed some rods, where it was lost upon a hard surface of slate or gravel. Another characteristic occurrence was a shrill whistling heard at the same time, apparently in a remote field. These facts were proved both by Mrs. Chase and Mr. Smith. At the time, too, the facts were not denied, and seemed undeniable. The Masons, instead of contradicting, were most anxious to resist the implication against themselves, by charging the transaction to a conspiracy of the Anti-masons with the elder, and to this effect they industriously circulated the story in all directions, the next morning, to the distance of many miles. The character of Elder Witherell, and his friends in Hartford, forbids the indulgence of the slightest suspicion of this kind, especially in the absence of any assignable motive. This additional outrage was not needed to strengthen their abhorrence or confirm their condemnation of Masonry. Besides, the charge of conspiracy, thus hastily alledged, indicated a consciousness of guilt, or at least a just suspicion of it.

"To repel this sudden and infamous charge, and in compliance with the advice of friends, the affidavits of Mrs. Witherell and her son, stating their knowledge of the transaction as it occurred, were drawn up, and Slade D.

Brown, Esq., a Royal Arch Mason, residing in the same village, requested to administer the oath. This he declined *for want of jurisdiction, and because he would not administer an extra-judicial oath* !!

"A similar application was made to Solomon S. Cowen, Esq., another justice of Hartford, (not residing in the village,) and another Royal Arch Mason. And he, too, refused to administer an extra-judicial oath !! These proceedings were had at an informal meeting, composed indiscriminately of Masons and Anti-masons, some of whom were from the adjoining town of Fort Ann.

"On the refusal of these Royal Arch Justices to *administer an extra-judicial oath* ! recourse was had to Amos T. Bush, Esq., of Fort Ann, who, not being a Mason, was less scrupulous. He administered the oath, and the affidavits were made and published. The citizens of Fort Ann, for the purpose of searching out the agents in this nefarious transaction, instituted a committee of investigation, composed of Masons and Anti-masons. Subsequent events soon evinced the zeal and sincerity of the masonic part of this committee, not in searching out the perpetrators of the outrage, but in sustaining Freemasonry against the influence of the aforesaid affidavits. They repaired hastily to Hartford, and there, with the above mentioned Royal Arch justices, and other Masons, plotted a most extraordinary conspiracy. It was thought indispensable to prostrate the reputation of Mrs. Witherell, and her son. To this purpose, the authority of office, and the forms of law, were made subservient. No circumstance had yet transpired directing even suspicion against any individual, and no person could therefore make the requisite oath, charging any individual with offence. The object, therefore, was not to detect and punish the alledged offence, but to institute the form of a legal proceeding, for the sole purpose of impeaching the witnesses called to prove the charge. It would be difficult to explain how such a scheme could be executed without perjury, and the gross violation of official duty. It was nevertheless devised, and executed, under the counsel and active participation of the magistrate who was to act the part of the examining justice. But the co-operation of the person who was to play the criminal, was as indispensable as that of the justice, and he was selected by concert and agreement, and his consent obtained! Benjamin Hyde, the village tavern-keeper, and also a Royal Arch Mason, was first proposed, and *Solomon S. Cowen*, Esq., who afterwards took part in the pretended examination, actually applied to him to stand criminal. The tavern-keeper very properly declined the honor, not from a motive indicative of a high sense of honor or propriety, but from an apprehension that it might injure his tavern. An application to Alonzo Hyde, his son, was more successful. He entered into the plan with great readiness. The scheme was now fully matured. *Slade D. Brown*, the said justice, drew the complaint, setting out the principal facts stated in the affidavits of Mrs. Witherell and her son. Colonel John Hillibut, of Fort Ann, a Royal Arch Mason, made oath that he believed them

true. Alanson Allen, another Royal Arch Mason, swore that he 'was informed that it was *rumored, or reported, or suspected* that Alonzo Hyde was 'one of the persons *implicated*.' On this vague oath, the said justice issued his warrant in the name of the people, and young Hyde was arrested. All the parties to this affair, thus far, except young Hyde, were Royal Arch Masons, and all this was done with the full knowledge by the said justice and all the parties, that young Hyde was not even suspected of the offence.

"The conspiracy against Elder Witherell and his family, is prominent and palpable. The court was organized, and what followed was in good keeping with what has been already related. Process was issued for Elder Witherell, his wife, and son, to appear as witnesses in behalf of the people. *They were arrested and taken into custody, and the prisoner Hyde permitted to go at large!* Elder Witherell and his wife were confined in separate apartments, on pretence of ensuring their attendance, and of preventing concerted testimony. They were examined in succession in a manner comporting with the character of the whole proceeding, and its obvious design. *Three days were expended in questioning and cross-questioning these three witnesses. They were subjected to every possible privation and indignity, and treated like culprits rather than witnesses. They bore the whole with due patience and meekness, and repeated over and over again the same story detailed in their affidavits. Of course, not one word was testified implicating young Hyde, or any other known individual. And yet a multitude of masonic witnesses were called to impeach their credibility. And this same family, whom but a few weeks before, these same Masons were anxious to retain among them, and for which purpose they had actually raised a liberal subscription, were now pronounced, by them, infamous and unworthy of credit for repeating on this examination, the same story detailed in their affidavits. It will here be remembered, that these affidavits had been taken after an open public examination, and that the oath of Colonel John Hillibut, one of the fraternity, affirming his belief of *their truth*, was the sole basis upon which all these proceedings rested. A parallel cannot be cited in the history of jurisprudence. A more gross perversion of the forms of law, and of official authority, for the purposes of slander, and detraction, and malevolence, and oppression, has never been practised. The court gravely *discharged* the prisoner, but convicted the witnesses for the people, by solemnly adjudging them unworthy of credit, and that no outrage had been committed!* A long report of the trial was immediately drawn out by Mr. Justice Brown, and the testimony discolored and misrepresented in a manner to further the design of the examination. This was forthwith published in all the masonic papers throughout the state. Not to exhaust your patience, and to confine myself within reasonable limits, I am constrained to exclude several characteristic features of the transaction, and all the detail of the testimony. These have already been given to the public in a minute and able report upon the subject, drawn up by a committee of gentlemen appointed for the purpose,

by a convention of the Anti-masons of the county of Washington, to which, for more specific information, I beg leave to refer you.

“On a review of the whole affair, it must occur to every one, that the outrage of breaking and entering the private dwelling of Elder Witherell, ‘in the night time, and putting his family in fear,’ scarcely exceeded the profligacy of the pretended examination. It must ever remain doubtful which was the greater offence against private right and public justice and decency. It is to little purpose that the first should be denied, while the last stands confessed.”

The letter of my friend bears its own commentary upon its face. As to the outrage itself, its objects, and the names of its authors, are alike shrowded in doubt and mystery. Of the conduct of the Masons, however, subsequently, there can be but one opinion.

In November of the present year, (1830,) James Gillis, in whose case the jury had not, on a former occasion, been able to agree, was again tried at the Ontario Sessions, and acquitted. No objections were raised by the special counsel to the sitting of Masons as jurors upon this trial. Gillis, it may be recollected, had removed from the state, to the southwestern part of Pennsylvania, shortly after the outrage. He took with him an important witness, whom those interested managed to keep away. The consequence was, that on this second trial, all the testimony against him was of a circumstantial character only, and was not considered sufficiently strong to justify a conviction.

At the opening of the session of the legislature, January 5th, 1831, the Governor again, and probably for the last time, directed the attention of that branch of the government to the subject of these prosecutions. He mentioned the resignation of the special counsel in May, as an event equally sudden and unexpected; and as he had “deemed it his duty to omit no proper measures for the vigorous prosecution of those trials,” he announced the appointments of Messrs. Birdseye and Whiting, to continue the legal proceedings left unfinished by Mr. Spencer.

"It was much to be regretted," his excellency said, "that the ample provisions heretofore made by special statutes, to punish the actors in this conspiracy, have not produced results as favorable to the cause of vindicatory justice, as all well-wishers to good order have desired. Money has been placed at the discretionary disposal of the officer intrusted with the prosecutions, and has been liberally expended by him. No item which he has certified to be necessary, has been rejected by the accounting officer, and so justifiable aid, within the constitutional power of the Executive, during my administration, has been withheld. It is but justice to myself to say, that in all cases where the Executive arm was necessary to reach fugitives, who had taken shelter, from the ordinary process of our courts, within the jurisdiction of other states, it has been stretched out for that purpose; and that where, from accidental causes, courts were like to fail, for want of presiding officers, my exertions have always been unremitted, and uniformly successful, to sustain them."

Something in regard to this matter, by way of a vindication of his own conduct, it was necessary that the Governor should say, after the severity of his arraignment before the public by the late special counsel. Less in his own defence, than what I have just quoted, could not have been expected. More would have betrayed a want of dignity.

The report of Mr. Birdseye, communicated with the message of his excellency, comprised a succinct history of his proceedings under the special commission. Much of what he stated, however, has already appeared in the condensed histories of the trials conducted by him, already presented to your consideration. On the trial of Jewett, Giddings, who had been subpœnaed as a witness, suddenly absconded. His reasons for so doing will appear hereafter, as stated by himself. It will be recollected that this man had been introduced as a witness on the trial of Bruce and others, in 1828, and rejected in consequence of his infidelity. Mr. Birdseye, in the report before me, states one incident in regard to this witness, which it is important should be preserved here, because of its bearing upon trials yet to be narrated. On the arrival of the special counsel at Lockport, to prosecute the case of Jewett, he says :—

"I was addressed by the defendant's counsel, to know if I should examine Giddings. I took time to ascertain all the facts, so as to answer understandingly, but reciprocating the freedom which had dictated the inquiry, I asked the defendant's counsel to say to me whether, if he were examined, any attack would be made upon his character for truth and veracity. *I received for answer that his character, in that respect, would not be attacked, for THEY KNEW IT COULD NOT BE.* Having made deliberate examination as to the extent of the testimony in the power of the prosecution to produce, to sustain him on the matter of fact ruled against him in Ontario; and also having formed a most deliberate conviction that that decision was erroneous in point of law, and after the assurance of the defendant's counsel as to his character for truth and veracity, which I found confirmed on inquiry, I felt bound to say that I should examine him if permitted."

In adverting to the case of the witness at Lockport, who persisted, on the trial of Jewett, in swearing impliedly to the murder of Morgan, in order to protect himself from answering the questions put to him; swearing, as the reason for such refusal, that he might thereby implicate himself as an accessory before the fact, in the murder, and persisting in the answers, after being cautioned by the Judge that he would perjure himself by such answers, unless Morgan was in fact murdered, and unless he knew of the fact, and that if the laws of man did not punish him, the laws of God would,—the special counsel suggested whether the constitutional guarantee that no man in a criminal case should be compelled to be a witness against himself, ought not to be placed by a general statute upon a different footing than that of judicial immunity from testifying, on the ground that such testimony may be subsequently used for the conviction of the witness. "Ought not," asks the special counsel, "the witness to be compelled to testify; and would not his security from any ill effects of such disclosure be sufficient, if that testimony were inadmissible in any criminal case against himself?" A general statute, the special counsel thought, would be preferable to any common law practice of favoritism, or the practice of giving rewards to witnesses to testify; a practice occasionally resorted to by most

governments, but not congenial to the feelings of our people.

In the course of his report, the special counsel mentioned the fact that Judge Gardiner, of the eighth circuit, had refused to try any more of these causes ; and he expressed a wish that one of the judges of the Supreme Court might find it convenient to hold the circuit in Niagara, which, in consequence of Judge Gardiner's refusal, had been adjourned over to the second Monday in February.

In concluding his report, this officer passed a high compliment upon Mr. Whiting, who had been associated with him by the Governor, after the resignation of Mr. Spencer. His previous acquaintance with the facts and questions arising in these investigations, as well as his local and personal information of the whole subject, added to his talents and experience as a lawyer, rendered his aid most welcome ; and his assistance was found very essential.

I am, sir, &c.

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### LETTER XLIII.

NEW-YORK, March 26, 1832.

SIR,

The fate of William Morgan, as far, probably, as it will ever be disclosed by human testimony, will now rapidly be developed. Another special circuit was held in the county of Niagara, commencing in February, 1831, and extending considerably into the month of March. His Honor Judge Nelson, of the Supreme Court, presiding. At this circuit, all the pending indictments in the case of Morgan, which it was believed the public good required to be proceeded with, were disposed of. The two principal trials were, 1st, that of *The People vs. Elisha Adams* ; and, 2d, the same *vs. Park-*

hurst Whitney, Timothy Shaw, Noah Beach, William Miller, and Samuel Chubbuck. Both trials were severely contested, and of long continuance. But as the alledged participation of the defendants in the transaction, took place while Morgan was in and about Fort Niagara, and as far the greater part of the testimony was the same on both trials, I have thought it best to unite them in a single narrative. For all the necessary purposes of history, this course will answer as well, if not better, than a separate outline of the respective trials; while time and labor will alike be saved, both to writer and reader.

The trial of Adams commenced on the 24th of February. That of the other parties above mentioned, who were impleaded together, on the 28th. Much difficulty was experienced, on both trials, in obtaining a jury,—the greater number of the panel having been set aside for having formed opinions against the defendants. A man by the name of Raymond, a Freemason, was drawn upon both trials, and excluded in each instance, by the court, for an unwillingness to disclose the obligations he took as a Mason, unless the court should require it; and also for having objected to doing so, unless the court should peremptorily require it of him, and for appealing to the court for that purpose. The next juror called in the case of Whitney and others, said he had formed an opinion; but he had taken three degrees in Masonry, and had never taken any oath, that, according to his understanding of it, required him to do any thing contrary to the strict laws of morality, and religion, and the laws of the country. It was enjoined by the rules of Masonry, he said, to be good citizens, and obey the laws. He never felt himself under any obligations whatever to show any favor to a brother Mason as a juror or witness. [On the trial of Adams, when told by the court he must disclose his obligations, the juror remarked that he thought it was driving a man to a great extremity.]



Edward Bissell, a very respectable citizen of Lockport, and a Royal Arch Mason, was called, and challenged to the favor, by the special counsel. The obligation of the Royal Arch degree, as disclosed in Barnard's *Light on Masonry*, having been read to him, he was asked whether he had taken the same in substance, to which question, according to the report from the office of the Lockport Balance, politely furnished me by the Judge, Mr. B. said:—

"The oaths I took were materially different; murder and treason were expressly excepted, and there was nothing said in the oaths I have taken about political preferment, nor about voting for a brother Mason in preference to any other man, as mentioned in the book. That part of the obligation which requires to assist a brother Mason out of trouble, whether right or wrong, is always explained in the lodges to mean, and I have always understood it to mean, like this:—if I should see a brother Mason in a quarrel with another man, it would be my duty to go to him, and by reminding him of his duty as a Mason, endeavor to get him away without inquiring whether he was on the right or wrong side of the question. It would be my duty to prevent the quarrel if possible. I think the oaths morally binding; and should think it dishonorable to violate them without a cause. I look upon them in the same light that I should a solemn pledge of my honor in any other case. The whole tenor and object of the lectures and other proceedings, is to inculcate a strict obedience to the laws of the country, and a faithful observance of the rules of morality and religion. With regard to that part relative to keeping a worthy brother's secrets, if a brother Mason should communicate to me a secret involving the commission or concealment of a legal or moral crime, I should not consider him a *worthy brother*, and of course should be under no obligations to keep it. In any legal proceedings, I should feel myself under no obligations, on any account, to favor a brother Mason more than any other man. The juror was admitted and sworn."

I have quoted this explanation thus at length, because it so closely corresponds with my own views, heretofore given, of the nature of the same obligation,—which views, or more properly explanations, were written two months before this report had fallen under my observation.

The first witness called upon both trials, was Loton Lawson, who gave an account of the taking of Morgan away from the jail in Canandaigua. Before Morgan was put in

to the jail, witness had had some conversation with him in regard to his proposed book. Morgan said he was in a scrape with Miller, and wished to get out of it. Witness went to Rochester, to communicate to some Masons that Morgan was willing to be privately carried away. On his return Morgan was taken out of jail, as heretofore related. Lawson denied that he gave a signal at the door of the jail, although he heard a whistle, but did not believe it was connected with that affair. No force was used in taking him from the jail. After he had left it a few rods, another man came up, and said, "Morgan, you are my prisoner," upon which the latter cried murder; but on being assured that he would not be hurt, he was pacified. No force was used in putting him into the carriage, neither was he blindfolded, or bound. He conversed as any body else would, and went willingly; sometimes the curtains were up, and sometimes down;—Morgan wished them to be closed, that he might travel privately, and be kept away from Miller, or from his knowledge,—that he might not be followed by him. On their arrival at Hanford's, Morgan made no objection to the change of carriages; he was not intoxicated, or drowsy, and nothing was given to make him so. Witness went with the carriage to Gaines, at which place he took another conveyance, and struck off to Lockport, where he passed the night, and went into Lewiston, to the installation, on the following morning. He did not, while there, hear of Morgan's making any noise at the fort; he was not himself at the fort, and had never been there. He saw Parkhurst Whitney at the installation,—he being one of the officers. He believed Whitney went down to Youngstown, [to the fort,] in the boat, but was not certain. When Morgan was asked why he had made the noise after leaving the jail, he said he was sorry he had made such a fuss. Witness saw no restraint used upon Morgan, on any subject, during the day; it was fine weather, and they had

a pleasant ride. He complained much of Miller, who was to have paid him five hundred thousand dollars, but he had not furnished money enough for the expenses of publication. He was willing to go any where, to get away from that man.

John Whitney, (tried formerly, it will be recollected, and acquitted,) was sworn as a witness on the trial of Parkhurst, Whitney and others. He stated that he rode on the carriage with the driver, Hubbard, from Canandaigua to Victor. He there procured a horse, and proceeded to Rochester, on horse-back ; thence to Hanford's Landing ; from which place to Wright's, he rode with Morgan in the carriage. Witness fully corroborated the testimony of Lawson, in regard to the absence of restraint, and of liquor, except two or three glasses, and also to Morgan's willingness to go. He did not recollect that any one had hold of Morgan when they got out of one carriage into another ; they got out and in like the others ; there was no scuffle nor was any force used ; he had a talk with Morgan on the road ; he expressed a willingness to go if his situation could be made to suit him, and he was assured it should be so ; the object of keeping him secret, was, that Miller, and those with whom he had been engaged in printing the book, should not know where he had gone, so as to follow him ; he said Miller had misused him, and he did not wish him to know where he had gone ; appeared as anxious as any one to keep his journey secret ; witness saw no bandage over his eyes ; no threats were used ; Morgan was told he could not expect friends unless he used his friends well ; he said he had done wrong, and was willing to get out of the scrape ; he knew they were going to Lewiston ; it was the understanding that the arrangements to be made for him, were to be as good in a pecuniary point of view, as the speculation with Miller, in publishing the book ; nothing definite however, had yet been agreed upon.

Isaac Farwell was examined on both trials. He lived near Wright's tavern, and was there when the carriage drove to the shed, towards evening, on the 13th of September, 1826. He was requested by Wright to go into the barn, where the carriage was driven. He there got into the carriage, to sit with the man whom he had been told was Morgan, while the person whom he found in the carriage with him, went in to supper. He, (witness,) was a Mason; and on inquiring what the disturbance was about, and who Morgan was, they told him that he had been publishing the secrets of masonry, and gave him an account of the manner in which they had taken him away, first from Batavia, for stealing a shirt, and then from Canandaigua. He inquired what they were going to do with him, and was told that they intended to take him to Canada, where they would procure him to be sent on board of a British ship of war. Witness held no conversation with him, either by signs or words. The person in the carriage had a handkerchief drawn entirely and closely over his face. When witness entered the carriage, and the other person left it to get his supper, he said:—"You d——d old hag, if you open your head while I am gone, I will smash you on my return." Morgan was helped out of the carriage, while in the barn, and soon taken in again. Witness was told that the fact of his being there was to be kept a secret. He had talked with Wright about it before the carriage came up. Wright said he did not know what the matter was, but a man came along in a sulkey, and inquired if he had seen the Rev. Mr. Cumings, to which he replied that he had not. He was then directed by the man in the sulkey, that if a carriage should come along, he must drive it into the barn, and say nothing about it. Wright added that he knew not what it meant.

Eli Bruce was examined on both trials, testifying much as on his former examination, with the addition of a few

particulars. Morgan's face, he said, was covered that he should not see who were with him. He talked freely, and was not bound. When asked if he knew where he was, he replied that he was passing from Rochester to Lewiston. On getting into the boat, he inquired what it was. He was told, and then asked if all was safe, with which assurance he was content. He was not landed on the Canada shore. Witness supposed that Morgan was to be provided for—that he was to be placed on a farm, somewhere back in the country, away from the knowledge or influence of Miller. When the Canada people refused to receive him, witness thought it was because their arrangements were not completed. When on coming back, Morgan was put into the Magazine, he, (witness,) supposed he was only to be kept there until those arrangements had been settled. There was no restraint upon Morgan's limbs,—he was not bound, even in the boat. A man was left with him, to keep him company at the magazine, but witness did not go into it himself. He did not previously know Morgan; but was informed that it was a voluntary proceeding on his part, or he, (witness) would have had nothing to do with the affair. When he heard, on the following day, at Lewiston, that Morgan was uneasy, he had some misgivings; but supposed from the character of the men, who were with him, that nothing dishonorable would be done, or any thing that would affect his own character and standing. The last that he had ever heard upon the subject, except by rumor, was, that he was quieted and contented. He had himself hoped for the best, and said nothing—being a public officer. He heard no expression from any one, that Morgan had forfeited his life. He remembered of their fastening the magazine, but had not inquired into the particulars of the case.

John Jackson, the person who accompanied Giddings to the magazine, on the morning of the 14th of September,

1826, and who was despatched to Lewiston, to inform Col. King that "the man in the magazine was making a good deal of noise," was again called upon the stand. His testimony on the present occasion, did not vary materially from his former statements, especially that made on the trial of Brown and Wright. In addition to his former relations, however, he now testified that he was at Batavia when Miller was arrested, on the 12th of September; and when he was first told that "there was a man in the magazine," he thought it must be Miller. He denied, however, that his business at Batavia had any connexion with the proceedings against Miller. He knew not for what that individual was arrested.

There were two witnesses sworn upon the trials of Adams, and Parkhurst Whitney, and those impleaded with him, whose testimony was of a peculiarly important and decisive character. The first of these was James A. Shed, now a practising lawyer in Ohio, whose name has not before appeared on any of the trials. He testified that he happened to be at Fort Niagara, on the afternoon of 12th of September, 1826, when he was inquired of by Col. Jewett whom he previously knew, whether he was a Mason. On replying in the affirmative, he was informed that a very high-handed measure was about to be entered into by the Masons, a parallel of which could not probably be found in the history of the world, unless in the case of King Stanislaus, who was seized and carried off by the Poles;—that it was their intention to carry off Morgan for publishing the secrets of Masonry—take him to Montreal or Quebec, and there put him on board a British vessel, if one could be found whose commander was a Mason. In the evening of that day, witness, on request, assisted to row a boat over the river, in which were two other persons besides himself, one of whom was Jewett. On reaching the shore, witness and Jewett went up to the village of Niaga-

ra, attended a meeting of eight or ten Masons at a lodge room, where the subject of Morgan's disposal was discussed; one proposed harsh measures, and even death. Another repelled the proposal with indignation. The meeting was broken up, nothing done, and the party returned in the boat to Fort Niagara. On Wednesday, witness assisted to remove powder out of the magazine, which was said to be spoiling on account of dampness. On Thursday, he was informed that Morgan had been brought to that place the night previously—went that day to Lewiston and attended the installation. Returned the same evening. On the Monday or Tuesday morning following, witness and another person met Adams coming from the magazine, who seemed to be agitated, and said he believed they had taken Morgan away. Went to the magazine—Adams called Morgan thrice, but received no answer—unlocked the door—entered—discovered a quantity of straw which had the appearance of having been lain upon by a man—an ammunition box, flag silk handkerchief, pitcher, decanter, and a plank that was broken, on the floor. The straw was removed, the boxes taken out, the plank refitted to its proper place, the handkerchief destroyed, and the pitcher and decanter carried down to Giddings's house. Witness heard no explanation whether Morgan had been removed by the Canada Masons or not. He was intimately acquainted with the person who first spoke to him, and they had the sign and grip between them. Witness made no inquiries of him as to the effect of this transaction; but did make enquiries of him as to the propriety of the measure; he said it was with extreme reluctance that he had had any thing to do with it, but felt himself bound as a Mason. Witness remained at Youngstown about six months afterwards, teaching school—conversed with Mr. Shaw, one of defendants, at Lewiston, in the following January, who stated that he knew Morgan was there, and felt very bad about it. Heard

Shaw endeavor to dissuade Giddings from disclosing the affair.

On his cross-examination, witness stated that no one was present at the time of Shaw's admissions—never heard either of defendants acknowledge that they had had any part in the transaction—never saw any of the persons who were present at the meeting in Canada afterwards, except Garside, —who wished witness to introduce him to some Mason of high standing, that he might get his permission to put Morgan to death. Witness refused.

Orsamus Turner, whose name has become quite familiar in connexion with these transactions, testified, in substance, that he was at Batavia some time before the abduction of Morgan, and heard a good many hard things said. He had learned from sheriff Thompson and others, that Morgan was dissatisfied with Miller, and wished to get away, if the Masons would give him an equivalent for the book he was writing. With this view, he, (witness,) crossed over into Canada, to complete the arrangements for taking Morgan thence, and settling him upon a farm. This farm, it was understood, was to be paid for by the Masons in Canada. It was situated near the Short Hills, and was to be given to Morgan, on condition that he should take back the manuscripts already in Miller's possession, and suppress the book. Witness supposed the bargain with Morgan had been made, and that it was well understood on both sides. Four men were to be responsible; and indeed they had offered to pay Morgan an equivalent in money, should he prefer it. On his return from Canada, witness stopped at Youngstown to take tea. While tea was preparing, witness and his companion, Darrow, walked to the house of Mr. Giddings, who kept a tavern, where the subject of the removal of Morgan into Canada, was talked over. It was suggested that it might be necessary for Morgan to stop there over night; and the question arose where he should be kept. Giddings



proposed the magazine of the fort, and introduced witness to a person, who, he said, would make the necessary arrangements. From the rash expressions which witness had heard at Batavia, which he now mentioned to Giddings, it was feared that some violence might be offered to Morgan, and this, they thought, would have a bad effect. The arrangement for taking him into Canada, was made for the double purpose of preventing violence, and suppressing the book. Witness expressly told Giddings, that the arrangement had been made with a full understanding that not a hair of his head should be hurt. Giddings, who felt as he did upon the subject, was charged to see that no violence should be offered to Morgan. The information had been communicated to witness by men of honor, in whom he thought he could confide—men of character and standing. After this interview with Giddings, and the other man, on the night of the 10th of September, witness had never had any thing to do with the matter, directly or indirectly. He attended the installation of the chapter, at Lewiston, but knew nothing in any wise inculcating either of the parties on trial.

The next witness called, and far the most important of any examined, on either of the long chain of trials, was Edward Giddings, who had been rejected, in consequence of his alledged infidelity, on the trial of Bruce, in 1828. He was again objected to, by the counsel for the defence both on the trial of Adams, and on that of Parkhurst Whitney and others, on the same ground as before, viz: his disbelief in a Supreme Being who will punish perjury. A long trial ensued upon this point, and the testimony taken in respect to his religious belief, was, if possible, still more contradictory than before.

It was most clearly testified by several witnesses, that Giddings, on various occasions, had used expressions showing that he doubted, if he did not disbelieve in, the immortality of the soul, and the future accountability of man. He

seemed to have read bad books, in an unenlightened manner ;—books especially calculated to mislead the vulgar and ignorant portion of the community, as they profess to communicate a world of (to them) new information. I shall not incumber these pages, already too much protracted, with specimens of the evidence given on this trial, as to his infidelity. He quoted much from Volney's Ruins ; than which I do not know any book better calculated to promote the cause of the Arch Fiend, among the illiterate. According to this part of the testimony, Giddings did not profess to know *what* he believed in, beyond the consciousness of his own existence ; and a little more loose reading might have taught him to doubt the evidence of *that*. He had a vague idea

“ Of the Great Whole,  
“ Who hath produced and will receive the soul,”

but it was little tinged with either poetry or philosophy. It was proved, on the other hand, that he had spoken at times of temporal punishment as being the retributive justice of heaven for sins done upon earth. A wide range of testimony was allowed to be gone into ; in which it was sworn that he was in the habit of alluding to a God,—as an overruling Providence, in his letters to his children, and the relations with whom he corresponded. But taken altogether, as I have already stated, this testimony proved that his ideas as to the sanction of morals, and his obligations towards his Creator and his fellow men, were crude and fantastic. Had he been well educated, he would probably have been either an enlightened christian, or a dangerous skeptic.

It was well known, by the repeated publications of Giddings, and by his evidence given before grand jurors, that his testimony was of the highest consequence,

in these trials; and corresponding efforts were made on both sides; by the prosecution, to have him sworn as a witness, and by the defence, to exclude him. A formidable array of witnesses had consequently been brought forward, both to impeach, and to sustain him, on other grounds than his religious belief. There was one circumstance disclosed in the course of this collateral investigation, which it would be unfair not to mention. By the former law of this state, as settled by the Supreme Court, on the opinion of the late Chief Justice Spencer, a belief, not only in a God, but in a state of future rewards and punishments, was required to make a competent witness. But in the late revision of our laws, the common law has been altered; and it appeared in evidence on this occasion, that in the course of a conversation between Giddings and the late special counsel, Mr. Spencer, the former having complained of the law by which his testimony had been excluded at Canandaigua, the latter had told him that the law would probably be altered in this respect. Mr. Spencer was one of the revisors of the laws and a member of the legislature. The law was altered, and the two provisions upon this subject are now incorporated in the statute book, in the following words:—

“§ 87. Every person believing in the existence of a Supreme Being who will punish false-swearing, shall be admitted to be sworn, if otherwise competent.”

“§ 88. No person shall be required to declare his belief or disbelief in the existence of a Supreme Being, or that He will punish false-swearing, or his belief or disbelief of any other matter, as a requisite to his admission to be sworn or to testify in any case. But the belief or unbelief of every person offered as a witness, may be proved by other and competent testimony.”

I do not intend any impeachment of the motives of Mr. Spencer, by adverting thus to the above mentioned circumstance. I have no evidence that the proposed change was made at his instance; nor do I believe that, were such

the fact, however anxious he might have been to convict the Morgan conspirators, he would have aided in changing the settled principles of the law of evidence for that purpose. If the law had been erroneously expounded, and laid down incorrectly in the books, it was proper that it should be corrected; but the conversation with Giddings, as given in the testimony, required explanation, and that explanation, I conceive, has not been here improperly introduced.

The testimony having been closed in support of the competency of Giddings, his Honor Judge Nelson said, that the more he reflected upon it, the more he was convinced, that he ought not, upon this preliminary inquiry, to stop to weigh and canvass the facts, and see on which side the balance of proof lay. The witness was presumed in the first instance, to be competent, and the defendants held the affirmative, and were bound to sustain it, and as at present advised, he should always hold the party objecting, to make out a clear and undoubted case of disqualification, before he would exclude. Doubt ought to admit. He would therefore admit the witness, allowing the counsel to urge the facts to the jury upon the question of credibility.

Giddings was thereupon sworn. He testified, that in September, 1826, he lived at Fort Niagara, and kept the ferry. About midnight of the 12th he was called up by Col. King, who said he had got the d—d perjured scoundrel who had been revealing the secrets of Masonry; that he was bound, hood-winked, and under guard; wanted witness to take them over the river, and deliver him up to the Masons in Canada, for them to do with as they thought proper; went over the river with them; Morgan was sitting on a piece of timber when witness went out of the house; he had a handkerchief over his eyes; he was then led to the boat by two men; one had hold of each arm; was not intoxicated; appeared to be very weak; his legs were not bound; nothing was said to him before they got to the boat; one

of the men, (Eli Bruce,) called for some water, and said the wretch is almost famished ; there were four of us with him ; five, in all, including Morgan, went into the boat, viz : Col. King, Hague, Bruce, Morgan, and witness ; two of the men, when we got over, went up to the town, (Niagara.) While they were waiting in the boat, Morgan said, " the handkerchief pains me most intolerably ; " the man who sat in front of him felt under the handkerchief, and said, " it is not tight, keep silent ; " he then said, " gentlemen, I am your prisoner, use me with magnanimity ; " the man who sat before him pressed a pistol against his breast, and told him if he said any thing more he would shoot him. Morgan tried to put his hands into his vest pocket, and could not ; witness then saw that his hands were tied behind him. In about two hours they returned with intelligence that the Canadians were not prepared to receive Morgan, whereupon he was brought back and put into the magazine. Witness had the key ; went up the next morning to give him food and refreshments. They went into the porch door, and were about opening the door leading to the magazine, when Morgan said, you had better not come in ; for as there are but two of you, I can defend myself against you, as I am situated ; I am determined not to be bled to death. John Jackson then said, where is that pistol, is it loaded, is the flint in good order ? for I will shoot the d——d rascal ; this was said in a loud voice to intimidate him. Morgan then cried murder and made much noise. Witness requested a man, (John Jackson,) who was going to Lewiston, to send somebody to still Morgan. A person, (Hague,) came, and in going up to the magazine, he said, " I know Morgan, " and he fears me as he does the devil : he will make no more " noise after I see him." Afterwards thirty more came, of whom all returned except the six defendants. The colloquies that attended the interviews between them and their prisoner, do not seem to be material to the issue, until the

evening of the 15th, when his further disposal became a matter of deliberation,—and it was at first determined to put him to death. While they were proceeding to the magazine for that purpose, under the direction of Col. King, one of them made an objection. He said he felt bound to assist, but could not approve of the deed. They concluded thereupon to defer the execution until they could send to “*the Grand Lodge now sitting at Jerusalem,*” for instructions. They apprised Morgan that they had determined to send to the east for instructions what to do with him. At this interview he said he thought that by climbing up on a frame, he could see to read, and he asked for a Bible. He also requested permission to see his wife and children; and these indulgencies were promised to him,—but not granted. After leaving the magazine, they were joined by Adams, and the manner of disposing of Morgan was again discussed. One man said by putting a rope round his body, arms and legs, and sinking him in the river, no trace of him could ever be discovered. Miller said he could prove from scripture that it was right to take his life; quoted a passage, but witness don’t recollect what it was; some high words passed between King and witness, who told King he would go and release Morgan; King was in a great passion, and told witness to do it at his peril; witness then gave him up the key and told King he would have no more to do with it; he (King,) took the key and gave it to another person. On the 17th, witness went to York, (U. C.) and returned on the 21st, when he was told by Col. Jewett, that “they had murdered that man.” The witness also testified to murderous designs expressed by Garside, (the same person named by Shed,) but they do not seem to have pertained to the issue.

A cross-examination followed of considerable length, one of the prominent points of which was the disclosure of terms of pecuniary advantage, upon the performance of which the

witness had agreed to leave that part of the country, and not appear as a witness. The Masons were very anxious to have him go off, and made him liberal offers, and he at one time agreed to go. The fact was admitted by Giddings, but as that was a matter touching his credibility only, it does not seem to be necessary to my purpose to enter into the detail. The examination and cross-examination were very long, and at times full of fearful and tragic interest.

Kneeland Townsend was next called. His testimony related principally to the proposition that had been made to silence Giddings, by money. The witness (then a Mason) approved of the plan; but it was so evident, from his own confession, that the witness was so intemperate and forgetful, that very little reliance, it is presumed, could have been placed upon his testimony, even if it had been important in its character.

Four witnesses, viz: Oliver Grace, Gustavus W. Pope, Loton Lawson, and Alexander Stewart, were then called to invalidate the testimony of Giddings. They swore to facts at variance with what he had asserted under oath, and also to his different versions of the transactions—but these were points for the consideration of the jury, as questions of fact, rather than as involving any important principle.

The two next witnesses called by the defendants, were for the purpose of impeaching the testimony of Kneeland Townsend, but their evidence was of little importance to either party. The next and last witness, however, was called by the prosecution, and his testimony was so important that (especially as it is brief,) I give it entire as reported:—

“Amos Bronson.—I had a conversation with Chubbuck (one of the defendants,) day before yesterday: (this is Saturday, 5th,) we were talking about Giddings's testimony; he said, as far as he has gone he has told the truth; this is a misfortune that has come upon us like the crash of an earthquake; we could not avoid doing as we did, and the first we knew it was

upon our shoulders ; at this time Giddings had got'to where he told that quite a number had come down from Lewiston, and six staid till after supper, and had given the names of Beach, Chubbuck, and Shaw : I think Mr. Birdseye was examining Giddings at this time.

“ Cross-examined.—Was here day before yesterday as a spectator ; am here to-day as a witness ; I told this conversation to several before I went home ; Chubbuck said that what Giddings had sworn to was as true as what he had sworn to himself.”

The cause of Elisha Adams was ably defended by W. H. Adams, Esq., and that of the people by the special counsel, after which an elaborate charge was made to the jury by judge Nelson.

The cause was committed to the jury at about 7 o'clock, on Saturday evening. On Monday morning the jury came into court, and declared that they had not agreed upon a verdict, and could not agree. Eleven of them were ready to render a verdict of guilty ; but there was one who would never agree. Such being the state of the case, the court directed the dissenting juror to stand up in the jury box. He did so, and proved to be the only Mason on the panel. The jury was then discharged.

The case of P. Whitney, Shaw, Beach, Miller, and Chubbuck, was also very ably and eloquently summed up by Messrs. Griffin and Adams, for the defence, and by the special counsel for the prosecution.

The Judge occupied an hour and a half in committing this cause to the jury, as there was a great accumulation of testimony to be analyzed, and spread before them in an intelligible form. The proof of the existence of the conspiracy was established, the judge said, as had been conceded in the course of the argument, on both sides. The jury therefore, would not be under the necessity of examining that point. It was not contended, on the part of the people, that the defendants were otherwise guilty, than as parties to the conspiracy, and this fact was the leading and important inquiry submitted to them. The question then arose, were



the defendants, or either of them—for all or any of them might be convicted—parties to the conspiracy, or to the imprisonment of Morgan? That they were, was positively asserted by Giddings, under oath; and the Judge proceeded to examine the character and weight of that testimony, to enable the jury to give it its just value, retaining the ground that he was an admissible witness, and leaving it to them to judge of its credibility. The court also adverted to the testimony of Shed, which only went to implicate Shaw, and would not of itself, conceding the truth of it, be sufficient for that. He deemed the question to rely mainly upon the credit attached to the testimony of Giddings. It was a question for the jury to decide. It was their province to pass upon the whole. If their minds were at rest on the question of guilt, they should convict, regardless of consequences; but if not, if they had any rational and conscientious doubts, their duty was to acquit.

On the morning of March 8th, the jury, having been out all night, came into court with a verdict of "NOT GUILTY," in regard to Timothy Shaw and William Miller. Not being able to agree respecting the guilt or innocence of the other defendants, the jury were discharged, and the court immediately proceeded with another of these extraordinary cases.

Very respectfully, yours, &c.

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#### LETTER XLIV.

NEW-YORK, March 26, 1832.

SIR,

The next and last of the conspiracy cases which came to trial, was that of the People vs. Norman Shephard, and Dr.

Timothy Maxwell. The first witness called, was General Jonathan K. Barlow, who resided in Genesee county in the summer and autumn of 1826. The last time that he had attended a lodge or chapter of Masons, was on the week immediately preceding the 15th of August of that year. The Mark-master's Lodge was first opened, and a conversation ensued respecting the book which it was said Morgan was now publishing. The Rev. Lucius Smith, master of the lodge, and High Priest of the Chapter, was in the chair. It was in part upon the business of Morgan's book, that the meeting was summoned. There had been several previous meetings upon this subject, and a committee had been appointed to concert measures for the suppression of the book, although of this committee the witness first heard at the present meeting. A report from that committee was announced, and one of its members rose and addressed the chair, wishing to know where they should present their accounts to be audited. He stated that the committee had been to Rochester and Buffalo,—and the witness believed he added, “and Canandaigua :” but of this he was not quite certain. The answer in regard to the account, was—“ You must present it to the auditing committee.” It was here intimated that perhaps they had better hear the report before they acted upon it. The master then interrupted the discussion, by saying “ it was not a proper place to receive the report. The lodge should be first closed, and the chapter opened.” The necessary direction for that purpose was thereupon given: all the brethren who had received no higher degrees than the Mark, retired; and the chapter was opened in due form. The committee was then called upon for the report, and one of its members—but not the one who had spoken upon the subject in the degree below—rose and made a report. He said :—

“ We went to Rochester, and assembled the companions of the chapter, and told them that one William Morgan was about to print the secrets of

Masonry; that the companions, or a number of them, on being informed who he was, knew Morgan—and after having heard a relation of all the evidences they had concerning the book, the High Priest of the chapter at Rochester got up, pulled off his coat, stripped up his sleeves, and said, ‘Bring me the man that dare do that thing, and I will show you what to do with him.’ The member of the committee who was making the report, was interrupted immediately upon saying this, and told (by the High Priest) it was unnecessary to report any further—that enough had been reported. He said it was improper that the report should come before the chapter, because, he said, ‘we may have spies upon us—and what is done here to-day, may be revealed on the house-tops to-morrow.’ The Rev. High Priest went on further to state, that it was not proper for the committee to report it in common, but that they should keep it themselves, and do their own business. Direction was then given to the chapter, to be cautious what was said—to be discreet and careful. On the same evening, out of the chapter, witness heard an inquiry made of the High Priest, by one who was in the Mark Lodge, (but had been exalted that night,) ‘what the report of the committee was?’ He (the High Priest) said—‘Our committee know their own business, and can keep their own counsels, and transact their own business—and it is not fitting for you or me to know about it.’”

The person here referred to as having that night been exalted to the degree of Royal Arch, was Judge William Mitchell. The committee consisted of William Seaver, Blanchard Powers, and Nathan Follett. It was Seaver who first spoke of having the accounts for the expenses of the committee audited. There was a pretty full chapter assembled on that evening. On the day following, the witness, (General Barlow,) started on a journey, and did not return until the middle of October. His testimony was fully confirmed by the examination of Judge Mitchell, who was the next witness called. During a part of the evening, the Rev. High Priest was clad in his clerical instead of his masonic robes.

Benjamin Porter, Jr., called as a witness, resided in Batavia in 1826, and was sent, some time in July, with a message from William Seaver, to the High Priest of the Chapter at Lockport. The message was delivered: it related

to Morgan's book, and a chapter was called that evening, which witness attended.

Gustavus W. Pope, lived in Lewiston, and was acquainted with Dr. Maxwell. In the spring of 1827, witness had a conversation with Maxwell, touching his having been at Batavia, at the time of Morgan's arrest:—

“ Witness asked him, familiarly, a question—said to him, ‘ Mac, it is said you were at Batavia when Morgan was carried off.’ He said he was there, he supposed, at the time he was carried off. His words were, ‘ I was there at the time three days and three nights.’ He said he never saw Morgan, or knew any thing about him—that he was there on his own business—but if he could have got the old devil, he would have crammed him into his waggon, and carried him off. Witness then said to him, ‘ you have a good deal to do with his Satanic majesty.’ He replied that he had. This was the sum of the conversation. Defendant said there was quite an assemblage of people there, a good many, at that time—that he did not know what their business was. Witness did not understand who went with him, (Maxwell)—thinks he said he went alone, in a one horse waggon; had a patient about ten miles from here, and having business at Batavia, he went through. Witness now *thinks* he said somebody was with him, but can't be certain. To a question as to his testimony before the grand jury, witness answered, that he did not remember what he then testified—but that what he now related was the truth, whatever he might have sworn to before the grand jury!

On his cross-examination, witness stated that the foregoing conversation with the defendant was jocose—more in sport than earnest. Witness commenced the conversation by way of a joke, and both laughed heartily. And yet it was on the testimony of this very witness, that the bill of indictment against defendant had been found!

For the fifth time, John Jackson was called—one of the most unyielding *non-mi-recordo* witnesses ever brought upon the stand. He was at Batavia when Morgan was arrested. Formerly he swore that he went thither on his own business—knowing nothing of the Morgan affair. He now said he went *partly* on his own business, and to accompany David Hague. But his testimony was so full of

contradictions, and so peculiar, that I despair of conveying an adequate idea of its *manner* by analysis, and I must therefore quote it without much abridgement:—

"John Jackson.—Was at Batavia after Morgan was taken away; went from here to Batavia; went alone; overtook some folks that were going that way; overtook Hague from ten to twelve miles east of Lockport. Witness can't say whether he started in the morning or in the evening; can't be positive whether he had company all the way or not; went on horseback. Thinks he did not go into the village of Batavia with Hague; separated about one mile this side of the arsenal. Hague rode on and left witness. Witness had conversation with Hague about suppressing Morgan's book, on the way. Hague was telling witness that a certain man had obtained a copy that Miller had. That was about all that was said! Hague said he was going, and invited him to go. Does not recollect that Hague hired a horse for witness to go; don't think Hague said he wanted him to assist in suppressing the book. Arrived at Batavia same day, a little before night; staid there one night. Witness was around the streets till after he saw the bustle in arresting Miller, and thinks he left there soon after. Was informed by a merchant there, that Morgan had been taken away by the Masons, and that he supposed they were going to carry off Miller. Did not see Doctor Maxwell at Batavia; saw him three or four miles east of there towards Le Roy, on the Canandaigua road. Witness saw a bustle, and asked Maxwell, 'What's the matter now?' 'God!' said he, 'they have got Miller; they have taken Morgan, and Miller was to go.' Witness went to the tavern where they took Miller in Batavia; did not get any breakfast that day; don't know the name of the place or tavern. Other persons were passing about there, but don't know who they were. Witness *supposed* he went alone; there were people on the road, but did not know them; thinks that he asked Mac if he knew Morgan, and that he was taken off; Mac said he heard he was taken off by some men from Canandaigua, but that he did not know the men. Witness left Batavia the same day he saw Mac at the tavern, and staid at Carrington's (eight miles east of Lockport) that night, or a few hours, till day-light; no one was with witness. Can't say how long it was before he went down to the fort. Witness went to Batavia *partly* on his own business, and to accompany Hague; that was about all! He understood Hague meant to get the other copies of Morgan's books or disclosures. Saw no others besides Hague that he *knew* went on that business. Did not see Shephard, and does not know he went out. Hague had before told witness what was going on; thinks it was the night before he, (witness,) started from home.

By the Court.—Witness supposed these copies were to be got by intrigue, the same as the others were; supposed they could get some stranger to

make friends with Miller, and get liberty to read it, and then clear out with it. Don't recollect as any other way was suggested. Thinks nothing was said about taking Morgan; don't recollect as any thing was said about Morgan, only that he was the one who wrote it."

Jehiel C. S. Ransom, attended a meeting of the lodge at Lockport, the first week in September, 1826. Measures were proposed to suppress the publication of the book preparing by Morgan. He understood that the meeting was called for that purpose. He did not remember seeing Maxwell there, nor did he know that Shepherd was present. Eli Bruce, called again upon this trial: attended the meeting of the lodge mentioned by Ransom, but had no recollection whether either of the defendants, or even Ransom himself, was present. Orsamus Turner was sworn likewise upon this trial. He was present at the meeting of the lodge referred to; but did not recollect whether Shepherd was there. Maxwell, he was quite sure, was present. They were at first, ten or twelve of them, talking over the subject of Morgan's book, in the street, and finally concluded to go into the lodge-room, as being more retired. "He had heard Maxwell was at Batavia at the time Morgan was carried off, and witness went and asked him about it. He admitted that he was there, and told some of the circumstances—stating that Morgan had been put in the carriage at Batavia, and had gone to Canandaigua. He related the circumstances pretty much as witness had since heard them; it could not have been long after news came that Morgan had been carried off—thinks it was before the installation, but after he (witness) had been to Fort Niagara on the business. Defendant did not say how long he had been at Batavia, or that he went with Hague."

At this stage of the proceedings, the special counsel, finding, as the reporter in substance remarks, that the witnesses remembered nothing to the purpose, abandoned the prosecutions, and the jury of course rendered a verdict

of "NOT GUILTY." The court was thereupon adjourned without day.

On the 22d of April following these trials, the Governor transmitted to the legislature the final report of the special counsel upon the whole transactions arising from the conspiracy and the abduction of Morgan. In this report, Mr. Birdseye stated very briefly the results of the three trials at the late Special Circuit Court, developing far more than had been previously known of the true character, and the closing scene, of that dark conspiracy, although there had been no convictions in either case. The special counsel considered that the disclosures warranted the opinion that Morgan's life had been taken; but there was no testimony inducing the belief that either of the persons yet under indictment, with the exception of Elisha Adams, was present at the perpetration of the crime. And as to him, the belief was rather a matter of inference, than of positive proof. Nor did the counsel suppose, that, with the exception of Adams, there was any person yet living, and within the jurisdiction of the United States, who was present when the victim was put to death.

The testimony on the last mentioned trials, had left no doubt of the *forcible* abduction of Morgan, although by threats and delusive promises, he had been induced to remain passive during his journey from Canandaigua to Niagara. In regard to P. Whitney, Beach, Chubbuck, and Adams, the indictments against whom remained undisposed of by reason of the disagreement of the jury, no doubt existed of their having acted under the fullest knowledge that Morgan was forcibly imprisoned in the magazine. Notwithstanding the efforts of the defendants, first to exclude the testimony of Giddings, and then to destroy his credibility, the special counsel declared his belief that the truth of his relation was not impaired.

As to an indictment yet pending in Genesee, and another in Monroe, the commissioner gave it as his opinion that there was not sufficient testimony within his knowledge to justify him in bringing either of the parties to trial. In regard to the first, there was also another objection, arising from the manner in which the indictment had been procured—less than twelve jurors having agreed to find a bill. This bill, however, had been presented in pursuance of a compact by the jury at the commencement of their session: their body was very thin, and they had agreed that bills found by a majority should be presented. In respect to the case in Monroe county, (that of the Rev. Mr. Cumings, now settled in Pennsylvania,) Mr. Birdseye had been assured by his predecessor in office, that it neither could nor ought to be brought to trial, until Simeon B. Jewett was placed in a situation to be examined as a witness; and from the course this cause had taken, and the length of time that must elapse before it could be carried through the Court of Errors, he did not think it would be right to hold the indictment over the head of a citizen to await such a contingency. For these, and other reasons, which he was ready to communicate to the Governor, the special counsel advised the entry of a *nolle prosequi* in both cases.

In regard to the indictments against Adams, Whitney, Chubbuck, and Beach, the special counsel intimated an opinion that no further testimony could be procured, and no additional facts developed; and of course the inference was, that no good would result from further proceedings in the premises. Should they be still prosecuted, however, the District Attorney of Niagara, he thought, would be abundantly able, with the lights of former investigations before him, to take charge of the matter. There would, therefore, be no farther need of continuing the office of special counsel. The document of which I have thus presented a brief abstract, is the last official paper connected with the Morgan trials.

With continued regard, I am, &c.



## LETTER XLV.

NEW-YORK, March 28, 1832.

SIR,

In the month of April, 1831, a case was tried before a local magistrate, in the county of Chenango, New-York, which deserves to be noted among the minor occurrences of the present history. I have, formerly, had occasion to speak of those seceding Masons, who have traversed the country, giving exhibitions of the process of conferring the several degrees,—broad caricatured representations, of course,—but, probably, marked with strong resemblances. There have been two classes of these exhibitors, viz:—those who have resorted to the measure as the most effectual method of inducing the fraternity to relinquish the order, and those who have practised the new vocation as showmen, for the mammon of unrighteousness. Their reception has been different with different classes of the community. The wonder-loving uninitiated, have crowded the exhibitions to arrive at a practical knowledge of the mighty mysteries of the craft; those nominal Masons who have forfeited membership by non user, and who are anxious to have the institution numbered among things forgotten, have laughed at the joke of seeing fools so readily parted from their money; while the zealous adhering Masons, who seem determined to be buried due east and west with their aprons on, have been exceedingly annoyed, without possessing either the wisdom, or the philosophy, to conceal their vexation. In some places where these exhibitions have been advertised, the Masons have met in num-

bers, and put them down. In others, they have deterred the showmen by intimidations; and in others, again, actual riots, though none of a very serious description, have occurred.

In the case of which I am now to speak, however, a still different method was resorted to, with a view of putting an end to these exhibitions altogether. The laws of this state prohibit showmen from traversing the country, and picking the pockets of the people by their exhibitions, without procuring a license for each exhibition, from two magistrates of the town where their kick-shows, or feats of jugglery, are to be displayed for the edification of the multitude. The penalty for each unlicensed exhibition of the kind contemplated by the statute, is twenty-five dollars. Much to the annoyance of my brother Masons of the town of New Berlin, in the county of Chenango, a man by the name of Harlowe C. Witherell came among them, and gave an exhibition, "for gain or profit," of what he called in his advertisement, "a practical demonstration of the first seven degrees of Freemasonry." Fired with indignation at having their hallowed rites thus exposed to the vulgar gaze, at twenty-five cents per capita of the spectators, the overseers of the poor, to whom the revenues derived from showmen accrue, incontinently commenced a prosecution for the recovery of the penalty attached to a violation of the law. Connected with the exhibition were also a series of painted illustrations of Freemasonry, which were specified in the second count of the plaintiff's declaration.

Although the action was brought before a justice of the peace, yet, its nature gave it speedy notoriety, and imparted to it a high degree of interest in that community. On the day of trial, three lawyers appeared on a side. The counsel for the defendant demanded a jury. A venire was accordingly issued, and a panel summoned by a constable who happened to be a Master Mason. The counsel

for the defendant challenged the array, upon that ground, and also because some of the jurors summoned were Masons, as likewise was one of the plaintiffs. The counsel for the latter declined arguing the question. The defendant's counsel then read from the statute, to show, that, if a constable be in any way *interested* against or in favor of either party, it is a good cause of challenge. The counsel for the plaintiffs replied, and denied the cause of challenge. The defence rejoined, and made a specific offer to prove that the masonic obligations are of such a nature, as to disqualify its members from acting impartially in a case of this kind. The court decided that witnesses might be called and examined to the points specified by the defendant's counsel. Three witnesses were then successively called, who proved the fact, that the constable and one of the plaintiffs were Freemasons—the first a Master Mason, and the second of the degree of Royal Arch. They all swore, substantially, to the accuracy of the obligations as disclosed by Morgan, and printed in Bernard's *Light on Masonry*, to which I have already referred. Two of the witnesses were examined at considerable length as to the Master Mason's obligation, of which they gave no very favorable impressions.

A third witness was then called, but the counsel for the prosecution expressed a wish to go no further into this question, whereupon the array was quashed by the court, and a new venire issued and given to a constable who was not a Mason, and by whom another jury was summoned. In opening the cause to the jury, the plaintiff's counsel stated the nature of the prosecution, and the grounds upon which a verdict was claimed. The exhibition of Witherell, which had been held without the permission of the magistracy of the town, they maintained to be an "idle show," within the meaning of the statute which prohibits the exhibition of "idle shows, such as common showmen,

"mountebanks, or jugglers usually exhibit." The Masons, it was likewise said, were "a distinct society," unlike all "other societies." The exhibition, by the defendant, was proved by two witnesses, who described the ceremonies. One of them, on his cross-examination, said he had seen several performances, but had never seen "common show-men, mountebanks or jugglers" give *such* an exhibition. The question "whether the defendant had stated that what he had exhibited was true Freemasonry," was objected to by the prosecution—argued on both sides—and the objection sustained by the court. The prosecution here rested their cause.

The counsel for the defendant in his opening, denied that his exhibition was any violation of the statute. It in no respect came under the section of the law prohibiting the exhibitions "of common showmen, mountebanks and jugglers," inasmuch as it was a true and genuine exhibition of Freemasonry. There was neither jugglery, trick, nor deception; and they relied upon the proof of this fact for the acquittal of the defendant. The first witness called, was examined as to the nature of the exhibition. He gave a minute account of all the particulars. On the swearing of the second witness, an objection was raised by the counsel for the prosecution, against calling upon Masons to prove their ceremonies and secrets; but, after argument upon both sides, the objection was overruled.

The examination proceeded, and the witness proved the correctness of the exhibition, so far as it related to the first three degrees. Gen. Augustus C. Welch, a Royal Arch Mason, and sheriff of the county, was next called. He underwent a long and minute examination upon the general tenor, and particular phraseology of the masonic obligations, and upon the rites and ceremonies of the lodge-room. The general scope of his testimony, confirmed the substan-

tial accuracy of the obligations, as given by Morgan and Bernard, with the few and unimportant exceptions.

John Pike, a justice of the peace, also testified to the general accuracy of the obligations, as read to him from Bernard's book, although he pointed out a few variations.

Another witness was called ; but the counsel for the prosecution said they were perfectly willing to admit that he would testify precisely as the two witnesses last mentioned had done, and they entreated the defence to persist no longer in this examination. The witness was, however, very briefly examined respecting a few prominent features of the obligations, and his testimony strictly accorded with that which had preceded him. General Welch and Justice Pike were both examined very fully as to the *ceremonies* of the lodges and chapters—examinations which were never gone into on any of the Morgan trials. Only a synopsis of their disclosures upon this branch of the subject, has been preserved in the report of the case, as furnished me by one of the counsel ; but, as far as this abstract goes, it corresponds with sufficient verisimilitude, to the Ritual recently published by Allyn.

The case was committed to the jury at six o'clock in the morning. At nine, the jury came into court, and stated that they could not agree. They were thereupon discharged. *Five* were in favor of acquitting the defendant, and *one* for his conviction. Counsel for the prosecution, Messrs. Nathan Beardsley, John Hyde, and Lyman J. Daniels. For the defendant, Messrs. Noah Ely, Charles A. Troup, and John C. Morris.

It is not the intrinsic importance of this case, in itself considered, that has induced me to present a sketch of it for your perusal. It derives some importance, however, from the illustration it affords of the state of feeling which yet pervades a large portion of the people, in regard to the masonic institution.

In May, 1831, Solomon C. Wright was brought to trial on the indictment against him for perjury, at the Ontario General Sessions. He had sworn that no suspicious carriage had arrived at his house in September, 1826, and had denied other circumstances calculated to identify the persons and the carriage conveying Morgan. On his trial, it was abundantly shown that his testimony in these respects was false ; but the court held that the materiality of these facts, in the original case, was not sufficiently shown, and he, too, was acquitted. This is the last trial that has taken place, growing out of the abduction of William Morgan.

The next in order, is a trial before the Circuit Court of this state, (Judge Vanderpool presiding,) held at Albany on the 13th of September, 1831, wherein Jacob Gould was plaintiff, and Thurlow Weed was defendant.

In the month of October, 1829, the defendant was editor of a newspaper at Rochester, (where both parties then resided,) called the Anti-masonic Enquirer, in which three publications were made, viz., on the 6th, the 13th, and the 20th of that month, constituting the grounds of the action brought against him.

The first, viz., the paper of the 6th, stated that "some months after the abduction of William Morgan, a large sum of money was placed in the hands of General Jacob Gould, of this village, (Rochester,) the then Grand Scribe of the Grand Royal Arch, *ostensibly* for 'charitable purposes.' That a part of this money was paid to a gentleman at Lewiston, and that other sums were expended at Gaines and Batavia—and that General Gould subsequently reported to the Grand Chapter, that he had used the money in the manner, and for the purposes for which it was appropriated."

In the next, viz., the paper of the 13th October, a letter from General Gould was published, in which he stated that

"In February, after the abduction of Morgan, I was elected one of the officers of the Grand Chapter, and as it is usual, particularly in masonic bodies, there were funds appropriated for charity. During the year I held said office, I received one hundred dollars, and expended it in small sums, not only '*ostensibly*,' but really for charity, and it is the only money that ever came into my hands from the chapter, or any other masonic body, during that, or any other year."

To this letter was subjoined a comment by the defendant, in which he asserted, that the plaintiff "paid fifty dollars to a gentleman of Lewiston, to defray the expenses of Mrs. Monroe, her son, and the convict Cron, from Canada, to give testimony in relation to the body found at Oak Orchard Creek." He also averred, that in the month of June preceding, a conversation was held in Rochester between a distinguished counsellor at law whom he named, and Jacob T. B. Van Vechten, Esq., of Albany, the successor of General Gould to the office of Grand Scribe, in which the latter stated, "that funds had been appropriated by the Grand Chapter, in 1827, for charitable purposes, six hundred dollars of which were placed in the hands of General Gould, the then Grand Scribe, who had reported the following year, that he had expended the money for the purpose contemplated—but that he produced no vouchers."

On the 20th October, the defendant copied into the Anti-masonic Enquirer, a letter addressed by the plaintiff to the editors of the Rochester Republican, in which he declares that he is authorized by his successor in office, alluded to, (Mr. V. V.) to pronounce the conversation mentioned, so far as he is concerned, to be utterly false. He proceeds to remark—"the statements also, that I paid fifty dollars, or any other sum to get Mrs. Monroe, or any other person from Canada, or the insinuation that I ever paid one cent to

"aid any one concerned in the abduction of Morgan, to get them clear of punishment, or any other person, is also false." To this communication, as well as to the former, the defendant added comments on its republication. The vituperative parts on both sides I shall omit, and present only those substantial points that conduce to the issue. The defendant repeats his former averment relative to the payment of fifty dollars by the plaintiff, towards defraying the expenses of Mrs. Monroe and Cron, (the man who came from Canada with her in search of the body of her husband,) and adds—"I shall prove (alluding to the allegation of Gen. Gould that he had commenced a prosecution against defendant,) that while he was acting, (or pretending to act,) upon a committee appointed by the people of Monroe County, to investigate the masonic outrage, *he furnished money to enable at least one of the kidnappers to escape from justice.* I shall then prove that he has deliberately and solemnly sworn that he utterly disapproved of the whole outrage, and that he had no agency in it, either before or after its commission."

The foregoing presents the ground on which the declaration, consisting of several counts, was framed against the defendant. On the trial, the counsel for the plaintiff abandoned all the counts except the third, which charged the plaintiff with furnishing money to enable one of the kidnappers of Morgan to escape from justice, and that he afterwards swore before a grand jury that he had no participation in the transaction before or after its commission. To these charges they would strictly confine the inquiry.

Stipulations of counsel had been entered into relative to the admission of certain facts, part of which were read by the counsel for the plaintiff, and among which was the publication of the paragraph recited. The remainder of the stipulation, the counsel for the defendant proposed to read, but it was overruled by the court, except that which ad-



mitted Burrage Smith to have been concerned in the abduction of William Morgan.

The defendant's counsel then offered to prove that the article complained of, was in reply to the plaintiff's publication in the Rochester Daily Advertiser. This likewise was overruled, as was also an offer on the part of the defendant's counsel to read *the whole* of the article in the Anti-masonic Enquirer of October 20th, upon *a clause* in which the plaintiff relied for damages.

The defendant then offered a stipulation admitting that Burrage Smith was concerned in the abduction of Morgan which was allowed and proved.

John O. Cole, who had been secretary of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the state of New-York, from 1825 to the date of the trial, was next sworn. He testified that a resolution was passed by that body on the 10th of February, 1827, in the following words:—"Resolved, that the sum of one thousand dollars be placed at the disposal of the trustees, to be by them, in their discretion, applied to charitable purposes." Gen. Gould, as Grand Scribe, was one of the trustees of this fund, as was also the witness. On the same 10th February, another resolution was passed to place three hundred of the one thousand dollars appropriated for charitable purposes, in the hands of Jacob Gould, for which he was to account. These resolutions were entered in the regular course of their occurrence, on the books of the Grand Chapter. On the 9th February, 1827, the day previous to the above appropriation, the following extract is found upon the same book.

"The receipts of the year will not equal the expenses of the session by more than three hundred dollars. Numerous applications are made for widows and orphans, and there are other pressing claims upon the funds." The witness further testified, that on the same day the committee on charities made a report, appropriating, in small sums,

to various applicants, two hundred and ninety-five dollars, which was all that could be bestowed in charities, without encroaching upon the permanent fund of the Grand Chapter.

Garret L. Dox, who was treasurer of the Grand Chapter for many years, including the period alluded to, testified that the usual mode of dispensing charity was to pass in detail upon individual claims, after they had been examined by a committee ;—was present when the appropriation of one thousand dollars was made on the 10th of February, 1827 ; never knew an instance of general appropriation for charity before, nor to so large an amount, either before or since ; it was offered and passed, he thinks, without remarks. Witness paid Gould (plaintiff) three hundred dollars out of the one thousand dollars appropriated, immediate—and subsequently paid one hundred dollars more on plaintiff's draft—as also, at a still later period, one hundred or one hundred and fifty dollars on Gould's drafts, for which sums plaintiff has never accounted, to witness's knowledge.

Garret W. Ryckman, who had been treasurer of the Grand Chapter since 1830, produced the books, shewing that nine hundred and fifty dollars were paid in 1827, under the general head of "*charity*," without designating the recipient. Witness was satisfied that the two hundred and ninety-five dollars reported by the committee as before mentioned, are not included in the entry of nine hundred and fifty dollars. A receipt at the end of the year 1827, had been cut out of the receipt book. None other was missing from the whole book.

Robert Martin, testified, that in 1828 he was a member of a committee appointed by the Grand Chapter, to audit the accounts of the treasurer. Recollects among the vouchers, a draft for three hundred dollars, with Mr. Watts's name upon it, as money paid to Gould ; thinks also, there was a draft of one hundred dollars from Gould. " In 1827

"Dr. Eights, of Albany, wrote to witness requesting him  
"to get a draft for one hundred dollars, of General Gould,  
"upon the charity fund. Witness called upon General  
"Gould, received the draft, and sent it to Dr. Eights. Wit-  
"ness did not shew Dr. Eights's letter to General Gould.  
"There was nothing said about the object for which the  
"money was wanted. Gould asked witness no questions  
"and took no voucher."

The defendant's counsel offered to prove that Gould had made a communication to the public, in a newspaper, stating that he had received one hundred dollars from the Grand Chapter, which he had expended in small sums for real charity, and that he had received no other money whatever from any masonic body for any purpose; but the motion was overruled by the court.

Dr. Jonathan Eights testified, that as an officer of a lodge, in Albany, having occasion to use some money for charitable purposes, and knowing that Gould had the control of the masonic funds for such purposes, he wrote to Mr. Martin to get a draft from Gould for one hundred dollars, which was done, and the same was received by the witness.

To a question by defendant, as to what Dr. Eights did with this one hundred dollars, the counsel for plaintiff objected. The court asked the defendant's counsel what they expected to prove, who replied that they would prove by Dr. Eights that this one hundred dollars went to Burrage Smith, one of the kidnappers of Morgan, to enable him to escape from justice, and was the same one hundred dollars referred to in the clause upon which the plaintiff claimed damages. The court decided that the defendant must first prove that Gould *knew* the object to which the money was to be applied, and therefore overruled the testimony.

The witness stated, in continuation, that Gould never asked him to account for the money, nor did he ever converse with him about its appropriation. Witness afterwards

received two drafts from Gould, of two hundred dollars each, in favor of Edward Doyle, and drew therewith four hundred dollars from the Grand Treasury, and deposited the same in a bank to Doyle's credit.

Samuel Barton was adduced to prove that Gould paid fifty dollars to the witness, out of the one thousand dollar fund, to defray, in part, the expenses of investigating a body, said to be Morgan's, found on the shore of Lake Ontario; but the testimony was overruled.

Robert King testified, that S. P. Gould & Co. (of which firm the plaintiff was one,) had an account against witness and Burrage Smith, who were partners. When it was rendered, witness told plaintiff that fifty dollars of it was Burrage Smith's private account, which he, (witness,) would not pay, offering to pay the residue. Gould told witness that if he would pay the whole bill, he (Gould,) would receipt it, and give witness a draft on John O. Cole, for the fifty dollars which was due from Burrage Smith. The account was settled in the manner proposed, and witness took a letter from Gould to Cole, in June, 1827, upon which he got the fifty dollars. Smith had absconded the February preceding. Gould told witness that it was so arranged that Cole would pay the order, which he did.

Mr. Cole, being recalled, stated that he paid the fifty dollars to King, not out of his private monies, but from the masonic funds.

General Vincent Matthews was sworn, by whom the counsel for the plaintiff proposed to shew that Gould, after this action had been commenced, stated that he had never received but one hundred dollars from the Grand Chapter, and that it was distributed in small charities. They also offered to prove, by the same witness, the truth of the whole conversation attributed to J. T. B. Van Vechten, Esq., (as published in the Anti-masonic Enquirer, of October 13th, previously referred to,) from which the controversy and

action originated. Objections were made to the admission on both points, and they were sustained by the court.

The plaintiff called no witnesses. The cause was summed up by counsel on both sides, and committed to the jury, who returned a verdict of four hundred dollars for the plaintiff. A bill of exceptions was taken by the counsel for the defendant, and the cause has been carried up to the Supreme Court. It remains *sub judice*, and I shall therefore forbear making the comments which such an unusual course of proceedings, in a libel suit, would, under other circumstances, amply justify.

With respect, I am, &c.

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LETTER XLVI.

NEW-YORK, March 30, 1832.

SIR,

The conduct of the newspaper press in regard to the facts comprised in this eventful history, has been a prolific source of complaint. After the sitting of the Le Roy Convention, however, in February, 1828, the denunciations of the press became less frequent in popular meetings, although the Anti-masonic conventions have never ceased to recur to it, and the subject has repeatedly called forth the finest declamatory powers of the Hon. Richard Rush. But while in the preceding pages I have more than once been constrained to admit that there has been a very grievous fault in this matter, on the part of a large portion of the public press; yet there has been much of exaggeration in the charges so sweepingly urged against it; and even Mr. Rush, upon this topic, appears throughout to more advantage as an impassioned rhetorician, than as an accurate commentator upon matters of fact. Much, therefore, can

be said on both sides. The charge is, that, by masonic influence and masonic power,—by the application of gold in some instances, and of threats in others,—the whole newspaper press of the land, prior to the establishment of professedly Anti-masonic papers, and the whole press except the Anti-masonic, since, down even to the present day,—has been kept dumb in regard to the unparalleled outrage upon Morgan, and the extraordinary transactions connected therewith. To this extent, or to any thing like it, the charge is untrue.

There are several considerations upon this subject which require weighing before it can be properly understood. In the earlier part of the excitement, the apparent silence of the press, especially at a distance, arose from a cause which I have already explained,—the incredulity, as honest as it was general,—that existed in regard to the whole matter. It was not believed that any real outrage had been committed,—or rather, perhaps, such were the doubts and contradictions respecting the affair, that the conductors of the press knew not what course to take, or what to say.—When, however, it was discovered to be a reality, there was by no means that degree of profound and universal silence that Anti-masons represent to have been observed. If I am not very widely mistaken, the earlier trials were published in many papers. The Ontario Repository,—one of the most faithful and vigilant of the public sentinels at the west,—stationed in the midst of the excitement,—though far from being an Anti-masonic paper, was, nevertheless, prompt and full in its reports of the trials,—the greater number of which were held in the beautiful village of its location. The reports of that paper uniformly reappeared in the journals with which I am connected, until all the facts of the conspiracy, abduction, and journey to Fort Niagara, had been published over and over again. Ample notices were likewise published, from time to time, of the trials that

followed, in which every new fact was carefully noted, until the last great trials came on at Lockport, when another case was published at once, and spread before the public with all its appalling and lengthened details. The occasional proceedings of the legislature, including most of the debates, were also published to as full an extent as the limits of an imperial sheet would permit, allowing a reasonable share of space for the discussion of the various other important matters crowding upon the public attention. These facts are referred to, not for the purpose of claiming any particular merit, but merely to show, that Mr. Rush, and other declaimers upon this subject, have paid too little regard to the actual facts of the case. There were other papers which adopted the same course, until their conductors honestly believed that the public had become thoroughly acquainted with the leading facts of the case.

But the truth is, the Anti-masons required too much at the hands of those publishers who were actuated by a sincere desire to deal with the most perfect fairness towards all parties. They required the republication of all the trials, at full length, though column after column of the testimony taken at each, was but a stale repetition of what had often been proved and published before ;—they required a republication of all the reports and documents, which followed each other upon the subject, in one or both branches of successive legislatures, though, like the trials, these papers were again for the most part repetitions ;—and they also required at our hands, a publication of all the reports and speeches, and resolutions, and journals, which the thousand and one popular meetings and conventions sent forth, deluging the country for three or four years. A compliance with requisitions like these, was impracticable. It would have excluded almost every thing else of public interest, respecting the affairs of foreign nations, and the high and varied interests of our own country, from the columns of the

largest papers in the Union ; while the small village journals, published but once a week, which at best can do no more than furnish an inadequate abridgement of the events of the day, would have been smothered with Anti-masonry in a single month : and yet the charge against the press, without discrimination or exception, was, that it had been bribed, or awed into silence, by the Masons. Sir, however reprehensible may have been the conduct of a large proportion of the public press in this matter,—and that it was reprehensible I have not hesitated to admit,—the evil was not thus produced. I have no idea that either bribery, or intimidation, was exerted to any considerable extent. There might, it is true, have been a few individual cases, like that of the threat of a man by the name of Doyle, to an unpatronised weekly paper in Rochester ; but, sir, you may rest assured that the instances were exceedingly few. My own experience is not inconsiderable in this matter : the course which I adopted as an editor, was such as to draw forth as much hostility from the conspirators and their friends, and those who palliated their conduct, as that of any other individual in the country ; and, I am free to say, that although some of our masonic subscribers have differed with me, yet with the masonic proscriptions of which I have heard so much, in the Anti-masonic papers, we have never been visited. It is possible that the establishment in which I am interested, may have lost fifteen or twenty friends, from the independent tone which has been adopted in regard to this matter ; but such a loss is unworthy of being mentioned. It is not greater than is felt upon many other occasions. There is scarcely any subject of morals or religion, or of the public policy of the government, the free discussion of which does not, at one time or other, give offence in some quarter ; and in all such cases, subscribers of papers whose minds are too narrow to tolerate any difference with their own favorite notions or opinions, resort at once to the withdrawal



of their names, as the most convenient and certain mode of retaliation or revenge ;—as the most powerful method of exerting their own intellects. These are occurrences with which every editor who occasionally ventures to essay an opinion of his own, must be familiar : but in regard to the subject before us, I hesitate not to assert, that in the exercise of this narrow-minded and *American* mode of attempting to shackle the freedom of discussion, on a comparison of facts, the Anti-masons would have little whereof to boast on the score of liberality. While they have been talking of the proscriptive threats of the Masons towards such papers as should dare to publish the Morgan trials, they have themselves been acting upon the same principle. The proscriptive resolutions proceeding from their conventions and popular assemblages, have been numberless ; while, so far as my own experience goes, I believe I am warranted in saying, that as many Anti-masons have testified their displeasure because I have not gone far enough with them, as have the Masons, because, in the opinion of some of that order, I have gone too far. My object, throughout, has been **TRUTH** without **FEAR** ; and as the good public has always more than made up the trifling losses sustained from both extremes, there has been additional cause for believing in the soundness of the maxim, "*in medio tutissimus ibis.*"

This practice of withdrawing subscriptions from papers, on every trivial occasion, for a mere difference of opinion between the editor and subscriber, upon accidental questions, more frequently abstract than of national importance, I have ventured above to denominate *American*. In no other country, according to the best information I can obtain, is it so frequently resorted to, as in this : and in my view, it is but a sorry method of manifesting displeasure, or dissent. With papers long established, and liberally supported, these individual instances of private proscription, can have little effect ; but in respect of papers enjoying

slender patronage, and struggling for existence, they strike at the root of the freedom of thought and discussion. In this point of view, connected with the erroneous principle upon which all our public journals are established, this illiberal system may be said to work essential injury. So far as it goes, it is directly at war with free discussion, and the independence of the press. Far better would it be, in this respect, if, in the work of composing and vending newspapers, there was the same division of labor, which exists in the European capitals. There, the editors and publishers have no personal knowledge of their supporters, as such : here, they are known to nearly all ; and the support which newspapers receive, is but too frequently begged on the one hand, and bestowed on the other, more in the form of personal favoritism, than in the manly and independent course of business, in which favors are neither known nor acknowledged on either hand. Where such are the relations between publisher and subscriber, there is no such thing as the freedom of the press. Every paragraph must be carefully balanced, and frequently all its pungency and meaning must be frittered away, to render it inoffensive to Mr. A., or palatable to Mr. B. Even gross official delinquencies must remain unwhipped of justice, and the cause of morality left to vindicate itself, lest peradventure the offending officer is a *patron* ! forsooth, or Mr. C. and Mr. D. do not acknowledge the same criterion of orthodoxy, either in morals or religion, which the publisher, according to his sense of duty, would wish to uphold.

Let me not be misunderstood, however, as maintaining the opinion that the subscribers to a paper have no right to exercise this species of influence, or to manifest their displeasure in this way, under any, or even under very many, circumstances. I am speaking only of respectable papers, conducted by educated and responsible men,—by men who have character at stake themselves, and whose principles of conducting their papers, are upon all

great cardinal principles of government,—upon all leading measures of public policy—held in common by editor and subscriber. It is in cases like these, that I condemn the disposition so prevalent in this country, of endeavoring to avenge every trifling disagreement, or even a casual error, by striking at the pocket of the publisher. It is an ignoble device, unworthy of all who are willing that the same freedom of thought and action should be enjoyed by others, which they glory in exercising themselves. But when editors are derelict in their duty to the public,—when they belie their professions, and degrade their calling,—when they prove recreant to their principles, or habitually violate the proprieties of the press, and the courtesies and charities of social life,—when, from change of conductors, or for base bribes, they turn their backs upon old friends and old principles,—or when, from general licentiousness, personal scurrility, a mockery of things sacred, and a disregard of those principles of morality and virtue which form at once the jewels of private life, and the true glory of the state, a newspaper becomes unworthy of support, and unfit to be received into families,—then is it a high moral duty to discard the offender, and make him feel the heaviest weight of public, as well as of private indignation and scorn. But in such instances, the remedy should be effectually applied; for every effort to crush the growth of vicious principles, or to check the career of those who disseminate them, which falls short of the object, “serves no other purpose than to render them more known, and ultimately to increase the zeal and number of their abettors.”

But to return to the subject of immediate consideration. There is a cause for the silence of a very large portion of the press, in regard to Morgan's abduction, and the transactions connected with, and growing out of it, which did not probably occur to Mr. Rush, when he penned his first and principal philippic, but which is the most prominent of the

whole. I mean the withering, palsying spirit of party, which has taken such deep root in our soil, and which exercises such a fatal influence upon our political and social relations. Scarcely had the public, beyond the confines of the original excitement, begun to believe that there had actually been an outrage, before the question assumed a decidedly political aspect. This was at once fatal to every effort for a universal dissemination of correct information, and for the cause of truth. The eloquent Robert Hall remarks, that "When a public outrage is committed against the laws, the crime is felt in a moment." But this able divine knew little of the nature of party spirit, as it is inculcated and fostered by the demagogues of the United States. The spirit of party, here, has neither a tongue to speak, nor ears to hear, nor eyes to see, any thing that may perchance militate against its favorite objects or idols. Hence, from the moment that Anti-masonry began to array itself against the powers that be, the crime which had been committed, could neither be seen, felt, nor exposed, by the conductors of the party presses attached to the majority. You may perhaps, sir, be startled at the boldness and apparent incongruity of the assertion, but it is nevertheless true, that there is but little freedom of the press in this country. Talk as we please of the despotisms of Europe,—of the restraints imposed upon the mind and the tongue,—I hesitate not to avow, that neither in England nor in France, is the press held in such abject subjection, as the great majority of the American presses are by demagogues, and the discipline of party. It is said to be a difficult thing to draw the line between the liberty of the press, and its licentiousness; but heaven knows that in this country the line is as broad and as visible as can be desired. We have licentiousness enough on all sides, and upon every possible subject. The eye sickens at the profligacy of the press, and the mind turns from it with abhorrence and loathing. With

this portion of the press, the bitterness of party is mingled in every thing ; and the ferocity of its attacks, is equalled only by the profligacy of its conductors. “ Gorgons, hy-  
“ dras, and chimeras dire, are harmless monsters compar-  
“ ed with such a press. No matter how virtuous, how in-  
“ nocent, or elevated, or noble, or persuasive, or beneficent  
“ the character may be, which is the object of its extermi-  
“ nating purpose,—be it Socrates, or Cato, or Peter, or  
“ Paul, or John Rodgers, or the Saviour of men himself ;  
“ there are neither eyes, nor ears, nor heart, nor compunc-  
“ tion, nor feeling, nor flesh, nor blood. The general and  
“ inexorable cry, crucify ! crucify ! consummates the fate  
“ of the victim.” Still, with all this apparent liberty, it is  
not that liberty of the press which is the safeguard of free-  
dom. There is among the mere party papers, little of that  
noble spirit of independence, that is exercised in England  
and France, which assumes the right of free and manly dis-  
cussion of every subject in which the public becomes from  
day to day interested, or which appertains to the political  
or civil relations of the country. When a candidate is to  
be assailed, or an incumbent hunted down,—no matter for  
his services, his wants, the purity of his character, or his  
claims upon the gratitude of his country,—“ spare no ar-  
“ rows,” is the maxim ; while the cause of sound morals,  
and enlightened government, and the love of truth, are as  
far from their thoughts as the remotest orb from the dull  
sphere on which they are unworthy to tread. It has been  
well remarked by the anonymous author I have just quoted  
above, that every good has its counterbalancing evil. “ The  
“ contemplation of the delightful freedom of our institu-  
“ tions, is most pleasant. But the extreme license, the  
“ coarse abuse, the gross misrepresentations, the frequent  
“ and unprovoked assaults of private character, the wanton  
“ dragging of names before the public eye,—these are great  
“ counterbalancing evils of freedom, for which there can

“ be no effectual corrective, but the slow and distant one, to  
“ be found in an enlightened public sentiment. Whenever  
“ general feeling shall be guided by gentlemanly tact, and  
“ correct conceptions of what is right, and respectable, and  
“ dignified, and of good report, any attempts of those who  
“ assume to sway that feeling, and direct the public senti-  
“ ment, to overstep the limits of decorum, unsustained by it,  
“ would be at once repressed by a general and palpably in-  
“ dignant expression of the public award in the case. The  
“ rebuked party would be instantly awed back to propriety  
“ and duty. Unhappily, all the individual minds of which  
“ the public mind is composed, are so liable to be swayed by  
“ prejudice and passion, and there is so much temper in  
“ party feeling, mixed up with all the expressions of the  
“ public will amongst us, that it is long before we may pro-  
“ mise ourselves, that they, who are the most efficient in  
“ guiding public opinion, will find their land-marks, and  
“ stand corrected when they go beyond them.” The fer-  
vent prayers of all good men are needed, that this time may  
speedily come; for unless it does, it is greatly to be fear-  
ed that the evil will have become incurable. A lax state  
of political morals among the people, and a degenerate  
press, operate with mutual and fatal effect upon each other,  
and the course at the present day is tending downward  
with fearful rapidity.

None knew better than Mr. Rush this low condition of  
the party presses of the day; the manner in which most  
of them had been established; or the effective party orga-  
nization which they support, and by which in turn they  
are supported. Whence, then, seeing that Anti-masonry  
had become political, his surprise at their silence in regard  
to the murder of Morgan, and the fruitless efforts, legisla-  
tive, judicial, and by voluntary associations, made to dis-  
cover and bring to punishment the authors? It is not in  
the case of Morgan alone, that more than a moiety of the

press has been silent. There have been other atrocities, equalling the outrage upon Morgan, that have been concealed from the readers of those papers, or denied, or extenuated, for political purposes. Look at the conduct of the same description of presses at the present moment. Look at the government papers, from which, if from any, the people should receive the fullest and most impartial details of the public affairs of the land. The same vindictive spirit of party which I have been attempting to describe: the same suppressions of every publication calculated to render even common justice to their political opponents: the same studied suppressions of the truth, which marked the course of the presses opposed to Anti-masonry, is openly practised, and publicly defended. An English or French journalist, would scorn to suppress the speeches in opposition, in either the parliament, or the chambers. No matter how strong their party feelings, the presses on that side of the Atlantic would never stoop so low as to deprive the adversary of a fair hearing. The speeches and documents, therefore, upon all questions of moment, are impartially reported, and the comments of the editors, given thereon in gentlemanly language. There is a degree of fairness and manliness in this course of political controversy, which commands respect, and illustrates the true character and uses of the freedom of the press. But instead of imitating such examples, of candor and magnanimity, by publishing the speeches of the soundest and most eloquent in opposition, our partizan prints, from the government official to the end of the catalogue—make a merit of substituting therefor, their own miserable commentaries and malignant distortions. Why, then, I would again ask, should Mr. Rush, and the other leaders of the Anti-masonic party, after they had made the controversy political,—and it began to assume that aspect in a very short time,—dwell so much upon the silence of the presses opposed to them? That si-

lence, I repeat, was only in conformity to the tactics,—to “the systems,”—of party discipline, and was in fact no greater cause of marvel than is presented to our observation every month in the year. There may have been, and there doubtless were, papers conducted by Masons, who refused to break silence because they were such. But these instances were few; and it is the baneful influence of party spirit, and the tyranny of party “systems,” and the artful appliances of controlling demagogues, to which we are to look for the causes of what Mr. Rush has called “the dull “insensibility of the press” in regard to the murder of Morgan. It was not, therefore, because Morgan was slain by Masons, that these presses were silent; but because assistance to those who were laboring to avenge the broken majesty of the laws, would have been injuring “the party.” And if another Morgan, and yet another, were to be abducted, and murdered, every month, so that a political controversy would be made of it, the same course would again be pursued by the same men. It is indeed a deplorable state of things,—such as almost to induce a belief that the press has become of questionable utility. Certainly, from more than one half of the newspapers of the United States, the people derive no benefit either on the score of intelligence, or morals. The small modicum of knowledge which is imparted to them, only leads them into error, and instead of enlarging and liberalizing their minds, they are narrowed by new-created prejudices, and blinded by misrepresentations that are not accidental. A great cause of this alarming evil, is to be found in what the world ignorantly enough conceives to be a blessing,—the cheapness of newspapers, and the facility with which new ones are established. In England, there is attached to the newspaper press, an array of talent and learning, which commands the confidence and respect of the community. In France, the great master spirits of literature and science—the first



men of the age and country, are connected with the press. Hence, when it speaks, it is with a degree of force, and energy, and talent, calculated to render the press that effective engine of moral power which it was designed to become. But it is far otherwise in this land of a thousand newspapers. Five hundred dollars, raised by subscription, will start a press; every village must have its paper; jealousies arise, and that paper must have its competitor. Personalities soon take the place of argument, even upon local and trivial matters: flippancy is mistaken for wisdom; smartness for talent; epithet for argument; and a reckless disregard of the feelings of others, and of the courtesies of life, for that manly independence which ought to characterize the guardians of the citadel of freedom.

But *nil desperandum* should be the watch-word of every patriot: and though we have in some respects fallen upon evil times, yet we shall do well to remember, in the words of Robert Hall, "that wisdom and truth, the offspring of the sky, are immortal; while cunning and deception, the meteors of the earth, after glittering for a moment, must pass away."

With high regard, I am, &c.

## LETTER XLVII.

NEW-YORK, March 31, 1832.

SIR,

The judicial history of Anti-masonry is closed, and yet the inquiry remains:—"What was the fate of Morgan?" For notwithstanding the number and extent of the legal investigations described,—notwithstanding the number of persons engaged, directly or indirectly, in the abduction,—and notwithstanding, likewise, the fact, that some of the ac-

tors in the dark conspiracy, had become witnesses for the state, no evidence had yet been elicited showing what was the ultimate fate of the wretched victim ; or, if his life had been taken, marking, with judicial certainty, the persons of his executioners. It is indeed one of the most extraordinary features of this conspiracy, that, when the fatal secret must have been known, (at least with sufficient certainty to have indicated the principals,) to so many people, no disclosure should have been made of the particulars of the last terrible act of the drama. Neither the apprehensions, nor the jealousies, usually existing among partners in crime ; nor the hope of reward ; nor the compunctious visitings of conscience ; had the effect to produce any satisfactory legal disclosures, in regard to the final disposition of Morgan, after his confinement in the magazine.\* This fact furnishes the strongest possible illustration of the strength of the tie which bound the conspirators together, while it affords an unanswerable argument against the continuance of any social institution whatever, that can exert such a dangerous power, for evil, as well as for good, if indeed good can again flow from it.

The difficulty of procuring testimony, was, from the beginning of the legal investigations, the greatest obstacle with which the prosecutors had to contend. Witnesses either fled the country voluntarily, or were spirited away, or were hired to absent themselves, in numbers, and with a readiness, altogether unexampled in the judicial annals of this, or perhaps any other country. Often did it happen, that, when the officers of justice had been apprised of the existence of fresh testimony, or when they had become acquainted with the place of retreat, far beyond the boundaries of our own state, of important witnesses, while they supposed the pos-

\* Elisha Adams, might, perhaps, have formed an exception to this remark, had not a misconception of duty, on the part of Governor Throop, induced him to withhold the reward that had been offered by Governor Clinton.

session of such knowledge was a secret in their own bosoms, such witnesses have been secretly apprised that the officers would soon be upon them, and were thus enabled again to escape their vigilance. In other instances, have these witnesses, when caught by surprise, while in charge of the officers, been followed hundreds of miles by members of the fraternity, interested in the fate of the accused, until plans could be matured, and the means put into operation, to steal them away from their keepers. In other cases still, witnesses have no sooner agreed to make honest revelations of the facts with which they were acquainted, than they have been surrounded by their masonic brethren, and so successfully dissuaded from their good resolutions, as to become as silent and uncommunicative upon the subject as the sphynx. Examples of this description have already been noted in the progress of this history, and others might be adduced were it necessary. Money seemed to be of no value, in these matters. Travelling agents were kept in pay, whose duty it was to visit the absconding witnesses in their places of retreat, and strengthen their integrity towards each other. Even Giddings, much as they affected to discredit his testimony, was tampered with, and money offered him to any amount he might desire, if he would leave the country.

Nor was this all. When, after encountering every difficulty, the attendance of reluctant witnesses had been secured, their conduct, as it has already been seen, was often of the most exceptionable character. In many instances, the *manner* of the witnesses upon the stand, was painful to look upon. Whatever of truth was obtained, was absolutely wrung from them. There was not only an almost uniform evasiveness of manner, among the masonic witnesses, but numerous cases of obvious and palpable falsehood. "Some of them exercised a species of casuistry, in relation to their judicial oath, which is not a little remarkable. It seems

“ that those implicated had argued themselves into the belief,  
“ that there was no greater sin than the breaking of a ma-  
“ sonic oath, even in obedience to the paramount laws of  
“ the land ; that if they told the truth in relation to the out-  
“ rage, they should divulge a secret which they were ma-  
“ sonically bound to keep, which would criminate them-  
“ selves ; and that, therefore, their only course was to tes-  
“ tify that they knew nothing about the affair. Strange as  
“ is the infatuation manifested by this reasoning, there was  
“ not wanting a counsellor of the Supreme Court, a Royal  
“ Arch Mason, to advise them, that if they were implicated  
“ in the affair, they might thus safely swear. Many wit-  
“ nesses, to whom circumstances almost unerringly pointed,  
“ as having a knowledge of, or being implicated in, some  
“ portion of the transaction, did come forward, and solemnly  
“ make oath of their entire ignorance of it ; while others,  
“ pretending to give an account of their knowledge of the  
“ transaction, testified in such a way, as to leave an impres-  
“ sion upon the mind of every auditor, that they had not  
“ satisfied that part of their judicial oath, which required  
“ them to tell *the whole* truth. Witnesses, in several in-  
“ stances, came into court with their own counsel, a cir-  
“ cumstance unheard of in courts of justice before, to ad-  
“ vise with them what questions they were legally bound  
“ to answer.” The instances of peremptory refusals to tes-  
tify, in the cases of Bruce, Turner and John Whitney, have  
already been stated, in the progress of the trials, too pro-  
minently to be soon forgotten—for which contumacy they  
were severally fined and imprisoned. But fines and impris-  
onment, for this, or for the still greater offence of having  
participated in the abduction, were nothing. The prison-  
ers were cheered by their friends without, and lavishly  
supplied with the comforts and elegancies of life, not only  
by individual contributions, but by lodges and chapters,  
hundreds of miles from the scene of action. Indeed, it

seemed as if the guilty portion of the fraternity, and the not guilty, who, by the cry of "PERSECUTION," had been brought to sympathise with the *sufferers*, "had set down, "and coolly counted the cost of the matter; and come to "the determination, that it was wise to shut the door completely against the bare chance of establishing the murder "of Morgan, by any facts or inferences to be derived from "their testimony, even though it should be done at the expense of the liberty and property of some of its members. "In these instances, the power of a portion of the fraternity came into collision with the laws of the land, in a most "marked manner, and set them, and their penal requirements at defiance."

But notwithstanding all these difficulties, enough was proved to render the fact morally certain, that the miserable and unhappy Morgan was basely murdered, by a band of assassins, in obedience, as they erroneously, and wickedly, and most unaccountably, believed, to the laws of speculative Freemasonry. Such was the belief to which Mr. Spencer had arrived, in the course of his laborious investigations; and such, also, was the decided conviction of that gentleman's successor in the office of special counsel. Mr. Birdseye's language, in his final report to the Governor, is this:—"The information thus elicited, is sufficient, I trust, "to satisfy the public mind as to the ultimate fate of Morgan: that he was taken into the Niagara, at night, about "the 19th of September, and there sunk. Yet the evidence, "although apparently sufficient for all purposes of human belief, is not sufficient to establish, with legal certainty, "and according to adjudged cases, the murder of Morgan."

There was strong circumstantial testimony warranting this conclusion, in addition to that elicited at different times upon the various trials. The information communicated to Mr. Terry, and several other Masons, in Canada, immediately after the transaction, was of a positive character, "that

"Morgan had been murdered, and his body sunk in Lake Ontario." The declaration of Ganson, (who, though he was acquitted, was unquestionably one of the original conspirators,) to Mr. Lyman D. Prindle, who furnished a deposition to the Lewiston Committee, was very strongly corroborative of this fact. "Let me tell you," said Ganson to Prindle, who had expressed an opinion that Morgan might have been rescued, "you know nothing about it: suppose there had been carriages at every road leading into Candaigua, ready to receive Morgan, in case he had been pursued; he could have been shifted; and let me tell you it was the case: let me tell you, if you could hang, draw, and quarter, or gibbet the Masons who had a hand in it, it would not fetch Morgan back. He is not dead, *but he is put where he will stay put, until God Almighty calls for him.*" This is a strong item of circumstantial proof,—for the words, "he is not dead," mean just nothing at all. The emphasis belongs in the last clause of the declaration; and it was intended to convey a safe, and yet fearful meaning, not to be misunderstood. At about the same period of time, as it appears from the depositions of two individuals of the town of Byron, in the county of Genesee, Dr. Samuel Taggart, of said town, stated that he had long been apprised of the fact,—and that "he should not be afraid to bet a thousand dollars, that Morgan was not in the land of the living: that he had taken a voyage on Lake Ontario, without float or boat, and would never be seen again by any human being." Another Mason, at Batavia, stated, at about the same time, in reply to an inquiry, that "Morgan had gone a-fishing, on the Niagara River."

Corroborative testimony, going to show that Morgan was put to death, has also been disclosed in another, and unexpected quarter—Vermont. You will not, sir, have forgotten the name of Dr. S. Butler—the same person who was sent forward from Stafford to Batavia, to herald the ap-

proach of Cheseboro's party in quest of Morgan, on the evening of September 10th,—the same Dr. Butler who was subsequently selected, by the sheriff of Genesee, as the foreman of a grand jury, whose duty it was to investigate the circumstances of the outrage, and who, as foreman, declared that they must not permit the Masons to suffer. This Dr. Butler, it appears, sometime afterwards, removed to Franklin County, in Vermont; and I have now before me sundry depositions, from respectable gentlemen in that county, setting forth that, since Butler's removal thither, he has, in repeated conversations with masons, admitted the murder of Morgan to have taken place. On one occasion, during an intermission in the meeting of Mississqui Lodge, he stated that "*Morgan was killed*, and that Col. William King, "and two others, whose names the deponent does not now "recollect, *executed the penalty of his obligation*, or words "to that effect." To a remark that it must have been an *honorable* business, as *honorable* men were engaged in it, "truly," he replied, "*the most honorable we have in that coun-* "try!" And he further observed, that "he did not know "but the whole business would yet come to light, as there "was one who was called on as an evidence, and who, it "was feared, would disclose, the whole truth; and that the "sheriff said, *if he did he should not get home alive!*" On another occasion, in the town of Enosburgh, Vermont, in reply to a question put to him by a brother Mason, whether he believed, that Morgan was in fact murdered? He said, "*there was not the least doubt of it, and that he justly de-* "served death!" He further stated, that he might have "known all the particulars about it—that Mr. Bruce, sheriff of Niagara County, told him that Morgan was actually "put to death, and would have told him the whole transaction, but, said he, 'I told him (Bruce) to stop; if Morgan "was dead it was enough. I also cautioned him to say "nothing about it to any person."

It will be recollected that on the night of the 14th, after the installation, a party of fifteen or twenty persons, besides those belonging to the fort, came from Lewiston, and were in consultation there,—taking supper at the house of Giddings. During that night, consultations were held at a meeting of these persons on the plain near the grave yard, as to the manner in which Morgan should be disposed of. All agreed that by the violation of his masonic obligations, he had incurred the penalty; they determined to execute that penalty, and cast his body into the river. But while they were proceeding to the cell for that purpose, one of the number relented, and the execution was deferred. On the following night another consultation, was held, having the object in view. Giddings expressed a desire that Morgan should be released, at which King became offended. Giddings thereupon gave up the key of the magazine, which was entrusted to Elisha Adams. Morgan was confined in the magazine until the night of September 19th, when, according to the belief of Mr. Birdseye, and others who have investigated the circumstances, he was put to death by being drowned in the depths of the Niagara.

Col. King, David Hague, and Burrage Smith, were all dead, long before the investigations were brought to a close. King died very suddenly, in the spring of 1829, at a public house in Lewiston, the morning after hearing of the testimony given by Bruce, on the trial of John Whitney,—after which trial, confident as he had been on his return from Arkansas, he could have had no hope of escaping conviction. These three men were doubtless engaged in the final deed, together with Howard, who had escaped to England. Elisha Adams, who received the key of the magazine, where Morgan was confined, when Giddings surrendered it, and left Niagara for York, died soon after his trial. King is represented through the whole of the transactions after Morgan's arrival on the frontier, as the



most bitter and vindictive in his feelings against him, for having betrayed the secrets of Masonry. He was proud of his masonic honors, zealous in the cause of the institution, and the leader of the conspirators, after the victim had been brought within his power. It was he who awakened Giddings in the night, when Morgan was brought to the brink of the river, with the exclamation—"we have got *the d——d perjured rascal,*" &c. It was he who repeatedly proposed, even as early as the night of the 14th, that Morgan should be put to death. It was King, and Bruce, and Hague, who took Morgan, bound and hood-winked from the coach, by the grave yard, near the fort, on the night of the 13th. It was King, who endeavored to push matters to extremities, by representing, as Ganson had done at Batavia, that he was authorized to suppress the book by a letter from Gov. Clinton; and it was he, who, with Col. Jewett, signified to Giddings, on his return from York, that Morgan had been executed during his absence, and requested him to walk the beach, and keep a look out for the body. In corroboration of this latter statement of Giddings, a piece of circumstantial testimony was elicited by Mr. J. C. Spencer, before a grand jury, previously to the death of King, which is directly to the point. The death of King having prevented his being brought to trial, this testimony never came out in court. It was this: A witness, (understood to be Dr. Pope,) testified to the grand jury of Niagara, that at some time, from two to six weeks after the abduction of Morgan, he heard that a body had floated upon the beach, one or two miles below Fort Niagara, and that a coroner's jury had been summoned to hold an inquest upon it. Witness was at Lewiston, and saw Col. King walking to and fro upon the steps of a hotel. King called to him, and said—"Doctor don't you want a subject?" He replied in the negative; but King followed up his question by saying that a body had floated upon the beach, a coroner's jury

was about to be held,—and the body would be buried—but the doctor could take it to the fort, and have any room [for the dissection,] that he pleased. The witness answered that the body would be of no use, as it had probably been spoiled by the water. King replied,—“the coroner has summoned me; I told him I had business at Lewiston, and “could not stay: I am afraid it is the body of Morgan: “Should it prove to be so, we shall hear to-night. You “must go to-night and take it up and hide it, and take care “of it: You must put it where it can never be found.” King was extremely agitated, and the witness was alarmed for him, as he evidently believed it was the body of Morgan. The doctor answered,—“If you have got into any “difficulty, you must work your way out of it,—I will have “nothing to do with it.” King thereupon turned to witness and said,—“You *must* go.” Witness repeated “that “he should not,—that he would have nothing to do with it.” Upon this refusal, the manner of King became changed, and he said, as if in a jocose way,—“I guess it is Morgan “—it is Morgan,”—and laughed quite heartily, as if he had passed a joke upon witness. But the laugh was evidently affected, and the doctor thought it any thing else than a joke. KING KNEW HIM TO BE A MASON.

This disclosure, taken in connexion with a request made by King to Giddings, that he should watch the shore, lest the body should float up and be discovered, is of great importance in making up a decision; and, when added to the numerous other circumstances, bearing upon the same point, leads to the irresistible conclusion that the murder was perpetrated, in manner and form before indicated. But there is yet other testimony. Mr. James A. Shed, the witness examined on the trials of Adams, P. Whitney, and associates, and whose demeanor was such, through long and searching examinations, as to acquire the fullest confidence of the court and bar for integrity and veracity, has

presented the world with another and most interesting section of this fearful history. The confession was made to him about six months after the deed was committed, by a Knight Templar.

On the 19th of September, eight Masons, having finally determined to put their prisoner to death, believing, probably, that it would be safer to have a smaller number actually concerned in the execution, held a consultation as to the best mode of proceeding. The object was to select three of their number for executioners, and to have the other five excluded, and so excluded, that neither should know who else, besides himself, was thus released, or, who were the executioners. For this purpose, the following ingenious process was devised:—They placed eight tickets in a hat, upon three of which were written certain marks, and it was agreed that each one of their number should simultaneously draw a ticket. They were instantly to separate, before examining their tickets, and walk away in different directions, until entirely out of sight of each other. They were then to stop and examine the slip of paper they had drawn, and the five drawing the blanks were to return to their own homes, taking different routes, by which means neither of them would know who had drawn the fatal numbers, and of course no one of the five could be a witness against the others! The three drawing the tickets designated,—a bloody hand should have been the device,—were to return to the magazine at a certain hour, and complete the hellish design. The manner of his murder, is believed to have been by attaching heavy weights to his body, and taking him out into the middle of the stream in a boat, where, at the black hour of midnight, he was plunged into the dark and angry torrent of the Niagara!—The boat for this purpose was got in readiness by Adams, in obedience to the commands of the vengeful conspirators. But he, with all those deeper than himself in guilt, (except-

ing the villain Howard,) failing in being brought to justice in this world, has been summoned to render an account at the bar of a higher tribunal.

Such was the melancholy fate of William Morgan,—a free American citizen, whose death is unavenged. He was stolen from the bosom of his family by an infamous perversion of the forms of law,—he was thrust into prison for the gratification of private malignity,—he was kidnapped under the guise of friendship,—transported like a malefactor one hundred and fifty miles through a populous country,—and executed in cold-blood by a gang of assassins, under circumstances of as damning atrocity as ever stained the annals of human delinquency! Nor was the crime perpetrated by ignorant or hungry banditti, or for the lust of power, or of gold. The circle of the conspirators, embraced, directly and indirectly, hundreds of intelligent men, acting, not on the spur of the occasion, from sudden impulse or anger, but after long consultations, and weeks, and even months, of preparation. Those immediately engaged in the conspiracy, were men of information, and of high standing in their own neighborhoods and counties; embracing civil officers of almost every grade; sheriffs, legislators, magistrates; lawyers, physicians, and even those whose calling it was to minister at the altar in holy things. Along the route of the captive, the members of the masonic fraternity left their occupations, however busily or urgently engaged, and flew at a moment's warning, to aid in his transportation to the spot where his sufferings were ended. A clergyman preceded him, moreover, heralding his approach from town to town, and announcing his captivity to the assembling brethren before whom he was simultaneously to deliver a discourse, dedicating a masonic temple to the service of God and the holy St. John; and enforcing the golden maxims of "PEACE, HARMONY, AND BROTHERLY LOVE!" Arrived at the end of his journey,

the wretched victim was imprisoned in a fortress over which the banner of freedom was streaming in the breeze. In vain did he plead for his life; and in vain did he implore the privilege of once more beholding his wife and children. Nay, more, with worse than barbarian cruelty, was his final request of a BIBLE, to sooth his last hours, and point him the way to a brighter world,—brighter, far, had he been prepared to enter it, than that upon which he was in a few hours forever to close his eyes! And what was the mighty offence of the miserable man, that he must thus be hurried to his final account, without being allowed a last farewell of his wife,—without suffering a single ray of divine light to glance across his path, or illumine the dark atmosphere of his dungeon,—but sent to his dread abode with all his imperfections on his head!—Why, forsooth, he was about to expose the wonderful secrets of Freemasonry!—It was feared he would tell how “poor blind candidates” are led about a lodge room by a “cable tow,” and how they kneel at the altar, at one time on one knee, and at another time upon the other! It was feared he would tell how they stumble over the emblems of “the rugged path of human life,” or bend with humility beneath “the living arch!”

“If it were so, it was a grievous fault;  
And grievously hath *Morgan* answered it,”

It is but too true that his *virtues* did not plead like angels in his behalf. But HUMANITY weeps over the deed, while JUSTICE was “trumpet-tongued, against the deep damnation of his taking off!”

Very truly and respectfully yours, &c.

## LETTER XLVIII.

New-York, April 1, 1832.

SIR,

The next and only remaining inquiry, is, to what extent were the members of the masonic body, collectively, or the lodges and chapters, as such, concerned in the conspiracy, which ended in the murder of William Morgan? That several lodges and chapters, and a large number of Masons in the western part of this state, were parties to the conspiracy before the fact,—that a very considerable number of the fraternity were actually engaged in it,—and that many more subsequently became cognizant of it,—are facts which have been conclusively shown in the progress of the preceding narrative. But it is unfair and unjust that the innocent should suffer in reputation with the guilty; and it has been an important part of my design to preserve the line of separation distinctly in the preceding pages. But notwithstanding all my anxiety, and all my efforts to reduce the circle of the guilty, with their aiders and abettors, to the smallest possible circumference, it is yet much broader than I could have wished, or than I hoped to have found it, on a careful re-investigation of the whole matter.

It has been the impression of Anti-masons generally,—and with many the impression has ripened into conviction,—that the project of the abduction of Morgan was planned and matured in the lodges, and that his murder was resolved upon from the outset. The idea has likewise prevailed, erroneously, as I flatter myself has already been shown, that, from the very nature and constitution of the society,

whatever is devised in one lodge or chapter, must be known to all, and whatever is known to one Mason, touching the interests and affairs of the craft, must be alike familiar to all. Such, however, is not the fact. The particular local measures of a lodge in Batavia, or a chapter in Rochester, are no more likely to be known in the lodges of Boston, New-York, or New Orleans, than are the purely local transactions of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard, to the members of Yale College, or of Brown University. In regard, moreover, to far the larger proportion of men who are called Masons,—who, although they have long since taken the degrees, have also long since ceased turning their attention to the subject, and are consequently Masons only in name,—they are no more likely to become acquainted with masonic secrets, or masonic transactions, than those who have never entered the vestibule of a masonic edifice. For a long time after the outrage, it was my sincere belief, that the crime was the work of a very small number of ignorant masonic zealots, without the knowledge or countenance of persons of character or intelligence; and it was much longer still, before I could bring myself to believe, that any masonic body whatever, had in any wise been accessory to the atrocious transaction. But these opinions were successively forced to yield before accumulating proofs that could not be withstood.

That the conspiracy was extensive, is evidenced by the whole history of the investigations. From the moment it became known that Morgan's work was in preparation, it excited great commotion among the Masons at Batavia, and its immediate neighborhood. Consultations were held, and various expedients suggested for preventing the publication, and for suppressing it, after it had been commenced. The most flagrant of those means have been disclosed in the progress of the present work. Morgan was alternately flattered and threatened; but to no purpose. His expecta-

tions of immense profits were excited, and he already fancied that he was half enabled to purchase an El Dorado for himself. He was therefore not to be persuaded, or purchased, to abandon his design. Consultations were then held upon a larger scale, and the attention of the several masonic bodies at Buffalo, Rochester, Lockport, Canandaigua, and elsewhere, was called to the subject. We have seen by the testimony produced by the state, on the last of the Lockport trials, that the Chapter of Bethany, at the head of which was the Rev. Lucius Smith, had sent forth a visiting committee to various masonic bodies, upon this subject. A very particular account of the consultations of the lodge in Buffalo, was furnished to the Lewiston Convention by Thomas G. Green, who made oath to the facts. From his deposition it appears that he attended a meeting of the lodge sometime between the 20th of August, and the 7th of September, 1829, at the invitation of Howard, alias Chipperfield. This deponent presided on that occasion. The business before them was the threatened publication of Morgan, and the most suitable means that could be adopted to suppress it. Howard proposed himself and another member, as a committee to attend to the subject. The motion was agreed to, with an understanding that no measures of violence were to be taken. A short time afterwards, Howard requested Green to go with him to the lodge-room that evening, where, he said, a few were to meet. In the evening, the deponent started to go thither, and on the way, fell in with Howard, but did not go to the lodge-room. They walked together back of the village, where Howard and the deponent had the following conversation:—Howard asked Green if he was willing to aid him in suppressing the book. He replied that he was willing to assist as far as was reasonable and proper, or according to what was proposed at the former meeting of the lodge. Howard requested a decisive answer one way or the other—he wanted to know



whether he, the deponent, was for the Masons, or against them. The deponent said he was for them, and was willing to aid in suppressing the book if it was to promote the interests of the masonic institution, and asked what plan they intended to pursue. Howard said they intended to go to Batavia and get the manuscript papers of the book; they were to get them peaceably if they could, if not, by force; and if they could not obtain them without, they would take Morgan and Miller and carry them off too. This deponent finally consented to join the party, and go to Batavia, for the purpose of obtaining the papers in the manner proposed. The deposition proceeds to give an account of the fruitless expedition to Batavia, on the night of the 8th of September, of which a full narrative has been heretofore given. It is in evidence that the chapter of Rochester was consulted; and no doubt exists of the fact that the profligate Johns was brought from Canada, and paid by the Encampment of Knights Templars at Rochester. We have the evidence, under oath, that a special lodge was convened at Le Roy, at 10 o'clock, A. M. of the day on which Morgan was seized and carried away from Batavia: and a cloud of witnesses have testified to the measures concerted with reference to this outrage, in the chapter of Lockport. Elder Bernard informs us, that five weeks before the outrage, the proposed work of Morgan was the theme of conversation among his brother Masons in the town of Covington, where he then resided, and that a Baptist clergyman,—a Royal Arch Mason of high standing, declared to him, that Morgan must be put out of the way, —adding, that with so much complacency did God regard the institution of Freemasonry, that he would be one who would help to do it! Indeed it may with safety be said, that the zealous and acting Masons, generally, west of Canandaigua, were more or less cognizant of the measures taking against Morgan, and many of them actually con-

cerned. At Lockport, in December, three months after the outrage, Bruce was elected Scribe of the chapter, upon the express ground that he was entitled to the office, from his exertions in the case of Morgan. Colonel King was elected and installed High Priest of the chapter at Lewiston, at the moment when he held Morgan a prisoner in a solitary cell, seven miles distant, and had murder in his heart; while a large assembly of Masons at the solemn festival, were unquestionably assenting to the abduction.

But notwithstanding all their antecedent preparations, they scarcely knew their own ultimate purposes. The first determination was to suppress the book; and all peaceable means having failed in the accomplishment of that object, arrangements were made for assembling a large body of Masons from different and distant places, at Batavia, on the night of the 8th of September, to act forcibly, if necessary. A party of fifteen or twenty persons from Buffalo, assembled at a tavern four miles west of Batavia, on the afternoon of that day, and proceeded towards the village in the evening. At the same time a party arrived in the suburbs of Batavia, from Lockport. There were people at Stafford from Canandaigua, and a large number were marched from thence in the evening, under Colonel Sawyer. Mr. Green testified that a large party were expected from Canada. The forcible removal of Morgan was at that time contemplated; but the project then, was to have taken him directly from Batavia to Lockport, and thence to Niagara. Various circumstances conspired to defeat the execution of the design, at that time. Green supposes that a piece of inadvertency on his own part, was the means of the frustration of the scheme. The taking of Morgan to Canandaigua, was a separate plot, not originally contemplated, and of sudden device. Even the conspirators at Batavia, were not aware of it, until the moment arrived for its execution. "Indeed," to quote the opinion of Mr. Spencer,

“ no very definite purpose appears to have been originally formed. The immediate exigency seems to have been his removal at all events, and his final disposition probably did not enter into the calculation of those who were concerned in carrying him to Lewiston.”

From the foregoing view of facts, which, necessarily, are in part but a recapitulation, it is rendered positively certain, that, so far from the abduction having been the device of a few mad-men, in a moment of passion, it was a work of deliberation, and of extensive correspondence and concert among the acting Masons, individually and collectively, over a wide space of country. This conclusion is inevitable,—the facts supporting it irresistible. The next inquiry is,—to what extent, if any, were the Masons, either indirectly or collectively, at a distance from the scene of action, concerned in this nefarious transaction? So far as it regards a *previous* knowledge of the conspiracy, it is a question of difficult solution. There is but little proof either way. The assertions of Ganson and King, of having had a previous correspondence with Governor Clinton, have already been refuted. They were never entitled to a moment's consideration. Among the depositions collected by the Lewiston convention, was one of a Mr. Wilder, of Genesee county, who swears to conversations with a Mason by the name of Grant, before and after the abduction. In the former, while conversing upon the subject of Morgan's design to reveal the secrets of Masonry, Grant stated, that “ they had sent to the Grand Lodge for instructions, and when they should get word from that body, something would be done.” In the subsequent conversation with the same man, and others, he was given to understand that Morgan was dead. It is possible that some of these infatuated men may have thus previously written to officers of the Grand Lodge, but hardly probable. To the Grand Lodge they could not have written, as it was

not in session. General STEPHEN VAN RENSSSELAER was Grand Master at that time, and ELISHA W. KING Deputy Grand Master ; and in the names of those pure, high-minded and honorable men, the public has an ample guarantee that they were never even improperly approached.

From the statement of Giddings, it appears that Colonel King did have a correspondence upon the subject with Mr. Gibbons, a distinguished Mason of Boston. But the letter exhibited by King from that gentleman, was written after the abduction, and was one of inquiry into the particulars of the outrage. But this correspondence was a natural, and doubtless an innocent one, since King was a near relative of the writer, who had been a delegate to the General Grand Chapter, to which the stolen manuscripts had so recently been presented, and by which they had been so promptly sent back. This circumstance, therefore, amounts to nothing. But there was another correspondence, which did take place, and which deserves attention in this connexion. It has been established beyond the possibility of dispute, by disclosures made under oath early in the last year, that a correspondence was opened between some of the Masons in Batavia and its neighborhood, and the Masons of the northern part of Vermont, in regard to Morgan's anticipated treachery to the institution. Letters were received by members of Mississque lodge, in Enosburgh, from the master of a lodge in Genesee, stating that a man by the name of Morgan was about to reveal the secrets of the order, and soliciting advice in the premises. Replies were sent, advising to a course of moderation. Two letters upon this subject, were written to Vermont, previously to the outrage, by Dr. S. Butler, with whose name you must by this time have become familiar. This correspondence, however, proves nothing criminal, or even censurable, in regard to the conduct of the Masons to whom it was addressed. On the contrary, they gave proper advice in re-

ply. But it shows that there were some Masons far distant from the theatre of the excitement, who must have been prepared for the event that did happen. A Mason of high respectability, of Saratoga, has moreover informed me, that, soon after the abduction, he was told by a dignitary of a chapter in that county, that "the western brethren had approached the east in search of light\* previously to the outrage,—that Morgan would be conveyed to Canada, and thence across the Atlantic,—and that himself and family would be amply provided for."

No further evidence exists, of which I am aware, going to establish the fact, or to countenance the belief, that, previously to the abduction, there was any general knowledge or privity of the contemplated outrage, on the part of lodges, chapters, or encampments, eastward of the county of Ontario. Would that no higher impeachment could be brought against lodges, and chapters, and grand lodges, and grand chapters, for their conduct in this matter, after the conspirators had matured and consummated their wicked purposes. But facts of an opposite character rise up in fearful array to the contrary. To particularize the transactions to which I now refer, in proof of this assertion, would be only to repeat a variety of details to which I have already had the honor to direct your attention in the progress of these investigations. Still, a brief recapitulation seems to be indispensable to the summing up of the case. I do not wish to be understood, in what I am now going to say, as inculpating, or intending to inculpate, the great body of the lodges and chapters of this state, directly, as accessaries to the abduction after the fact. But I do say, that while great numbers of Masons individually, and some chapters collectively, have laid themselves open to grievous censure in this respect, the characters of all the lodges and chap-

\* Masonic language, now, I believe, well understood.

ters of the state have been compromised by the grand bodies in which all are supposed to be represented. In the month of February, 1827, five months after the perpetration of the crime, the Grand Chapter rejected a proposition offering a reward of 1000 dollars, for the discovery and apprehension of the authors of it: while, on the other hand, they appropriated the like sum of 1000 dollars, under the pretext of unspecified charity, but in fact to be used for the aid, comfort, and assistance of the criminals. In the month of March, of the same year, Howard, one of the murderers, by his own confession, was cherished by certain of the Masons in this city: he was kept in concealment from the officers of justice: funds were raised for him: and he was finally smuggled across Long Island, and put on board of one of the foreign packets, off Gravesend or Coney Island. In the month of June, of the same year, the sum of 100 dollars was voted from the funds of the Grand Lodge, to Eli Bruce; and the additional sum for which he had applied, was raised for him by the brethren out of the lodge. In the autumn of the same year, the sum of 100 dollars was appropriated from the funds of Jerusalem Chapter of this city, for the benefit of "the western sufferers," as the conspirators were called.\* Money for the same object, was raised by one of the encampments in this city; but to what amount, I have not been informed. I have likewise abundant reason to believe, that other lodges and chapters of this city, contributed to the same object;—and the sum of 500 dollars was subsequently applied to the same benevolent purposes, by the Grand Lodge. These facts are known: most of them have already been proclaimed, as it were upon the house-tops: and how many additional appropriations of the same description, were made by other masonic bodies, at other

\* The amount appropriated by this chapter at the time in question, has been stated at 500 dollars, by Mr. J. F. Hanks, who first published the fact; but I have been positively assured by a gentleman who was then a high officer of that chapter, that the appropriation was no more than 100 dollars.

times and places, for the same object, remains yet among the undiscovered secrets of the order. But granting that all the misdeeds of this description have been enumerated,—that not a single dollar more was appropriated by either lodge or chapter, or individual Mason, for the purpose of retaining counsel for the accused; of supporting the convicts in prison; of aiding in the escape of some; of paying the expenses of others; and of assisting in the spiriting away of witnesses,—is the catalogue not enough? Is further evidence necessary to convince a virtuous community, that the institution ought to be abolished? Do those *Masons*, who yet adhere to the institution, but who, nevertheless, would shrink from the commission of the most venial crime,—who would “feel a stain like a wound,”—and who have been kept in ignorance of these astounding facts, require more light to enable them to perceive that the institution is no longer entitled to the countenance or support of good men and just?

It has been said, however, in extenuation of most of these appropriations of money by the lodges and chapters, that, when they were made, those who voted for them, did so under a belief that great oppression was experienced by the accused at the west,—that, in fact, (when the appropriations were made,) it was not believed that any very considerable crime had been committed;—and, in short, it has been maintained, that those voting the money, honestly believed the accused, to whom it was going, to be innocent and persecuted men. Such, I am willing to admit, to a certain extent, was the fact;—such, I have the best reason for believing, was, in a very limited degree, the true state of the case. *But in all instances, the master-spirits knew well enough the true state of the case*; and, both in the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter, at the times of making the appropriations, numbers of the conspirators were themselves present,—wearing the lamb-skin emblems of innocence, and

taking part in the proceedings! Making, however, all possible allowance for the erroneous views under which the plea I am now considering supposes them to have acted;—making, also, an additional allowance for the sympathies that had been awakened in behalf of their western brethren, and for the indignation that had been kindled by what was justly deemed an undistinguishing, intolerant, and indefensible proscription of the whole masonic body, for the offences of a part,—it yet falls immeasurably short of a justification for the helping away of Howard, and the advancing of money to enable Burrage Smith to fly to New-Orleans, and Howard to England. Nor can even this excuse avail to any extent, for more than a very short period. Grant, if you please,—which by the way could not have been the fact,—but grant, for the sake of the argument, that a majority of the members of the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter, at the time of making those appropriations, did suppose the accused were innocent, they must have soon been undeceived. Upon what principle, then, are we to account for their subsequent conduct? Trials of the conspirators were occurring every few months, and volumes of appalling testimony were following each other, in rapid succession, placing the innocence of the accused, and of numerous unknown accomplices, entirely out of the question,—*but no example was made of any of these.* In the earlier part of the excitement, several members of the order were tried for the conspiracy, and convicted by their own confessions, —*but none of these, even to this day, have been expelled from either lodge or chapter.* Several more have been convicted, after warmly contested trials, who, with the former, have served out their respective terms of imprisonment,—*but none of these have been expelled.* Witnesses have stood mute, braving the authority of the civil law, even in the presence of the highest of our criminal tribunals,—*but none of these have been expelled.* Other witness-



es have refused to testify, expressly upon the ground that in doing so, they must criminate themselves,—*neither have these been expelled.* Witnesses have testified falsely, as their subsequent examinations have fully proved,—*neither have these been expelled.* It has been proved in court, over and over again, that the measures for the abduction of Morgan, were concerted in the lodges and chapters of the west,—*but the warrants for such lodges and chapters have never been recalled.* Indeed, **THERE HAS NEVER YET BEEN UTTERED, FROM THE WALLS OF EITHER LODGE OR CHAPTER, FROM THE HIGHEST TO THE LOWEST, AN EXPRESSION OF REAL CENSURE, OR OF HONEST INDIGNATION, AGAINST ANY INDIVIDUAL, HOWEVER CLEARLY IT MAY HAVE BEEN KNOWN THAT HE WAS ENGAGED IN DEPRIVING A FREE CITIZEN OF HIS LIBERTY, AND PUTTING HIM TO DEATH IN COLD BLOOD !**

There is, however, one word to be said, before I close the present letter, in mitigation of the offences of those who were first engaged in depriving Morgan of his liberty. There is no reason whatever for believing that his murder was contemplated when he was first arrested, or by any of those engaged in transferring him from the jail in Canandaigua, to Niagara. I have already said, that the carrying of Morgan to Canandaigua, was not connected with the original plan. That movement was projected and executed by Cheseboro, merely for the purpose of disgracing him by the imputation of petit larceny. When acquitted upon that charge, feeling that it would not answer to allow Morgan to return to his labors with the ability to excite the public sympathy by the tale of his wrongs, Cheseboro procured his imprisonment on the civil process, merely to give time for them to mature some new scheme to suppress the proposed disclosure of the momentous secrets of Masonry. The arrangements for his transportation to Canada, were hastily made, although it had been so long determined that something should be done to suppress the book ; and the murder

of the man was rather the result of the imperfection of those arrangements, than of previous design. In this belief I am strengthened by the opinions of all the gentlemen, as I believe, who have acted as special counsel in the prosecutions, and also of Mr. Whiting, their able and constant auxiliary. Those who took him to the fort, calculated on nothing more than his temporary confinement, until he could be sent away into Canada, or to sea, via Quebec. But when the Canadians utterly refused to receive him, and the conspirators found him thrown back upon their hands, they were unexpectedly embarrassed. They had violated the law ;—they feared to set their prisoner at large, to blazon the outrage they had thus far committed ;—they could not advance, and dared not recede. In this posture of affairs, they sent back an express to Rochester, for advice. One of the conspirators in that place proceeded instantly to the frontier, and in an evil hour, excited by passion,—pushed on by fear,—and laboring under a strong delusion,—they were led to shed the blood of their victim. That blood yet cries from the ground for vengeance !

I am, sir, with respect, &c.

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## LETTER XLIX.

NEW-YORK, April 2, 1832.

SIR,

It is a subject of no ordinary satisfaction to me, and will doubtless afford still greater relief to yourself, to find that these somewhat desultory communications have at length been brought to a point at which it can be said, in the words of the wise preacher of old, “ let us hear the conclusion of “ the whole matter.” At the close of the rapid survey of speculative Freemasonry with which the preceding essays

were commenced, a variety of reasons were offered, why, in my humble opinion, the institution ought to be totally abandoned, on its own *merits*, independently of any charges of malconduct that might have been preferred against it. The more I have reflected upon this matter, the more strongly have I become persuaded, that the reasons there set forth are sound and just. Every hour of thought that I have been enabled to devote to this subject, has but rendered the conviction stronger; that Masonry is wholly inconsistent with sound reason, and with the state of society at the present day. Let it be granted, if its votaries please, that its objects were originally laudable and humane, and are so still, in the estimation of the better portion, and even of the great majority of its members; yet, I would ask, why fortify the performance of duties so eminently incumbent upon us all as men and christians, by oaths and penalties, which, however explained, must yet always sound barbarous and shocking when repeated. The duties of the Gospel are not imposed by any such sanctions; and I do believe this feature of the society infinitely behind the age in which we live, even if it be not more barbarous than would ever have been openly tolerated in any age or community. But, throwing these considerations entirely aside, I am constrained to say, that, in full view of the facts which have been disclosed in the preceding irregular narrative, the institution of Freemasonry ought to be entirely abolished for its *demerits*,—and that for the following reasons:—

I. On account of its laws and its obligations. Liberal minded and good men seldom do wrong, whether they are Masons or not. Masons of this character look to the *spirit* of the obligations, and practice the virtues inculcated by its lessons and its emblems. But we have seen in the course of these disclosures, that a great number of Masons,—perhaps a majority of the adhering members,—not only believe the obligations to be binding, but are even ready

to act upon them to the letter. They think every thing about it means what it says ; and have shown that they are ready to act accordingly.

II. Many of its members believe the institution to be of divine origin. They make it a substitute for religion : they have been so taught, and are honest in the opinion : and when the case occurs, they act upon this belief. Such men, though not by its spirit, are yet justified by the letter of the laws. The institution therefore leads to fatal error, in regard to matters of infinite moment to the immortal interests of man.

III. The garments of Masonry are stained with blood. An American citizen has been sacrificed upon its altar, for no breach of the civil laws of the land, but *only* for the violation of his masonic obligations. What has once happened, may happen again : and the only safe and secure disposition of the subject is to abandon it, and blot it out forever.

IV. The power of Masonry has proved too strong for the arm of the civil law. The cry which earth sends up to heaven, when her bosom is stained with the blood of a murdered son, seldom fails to ensure just retribution from the hands of her children : but in this instance it *has* failed. “ Although,”—says Chancellor Walworth, when speaking upon this subject—“ it is the duty of Masons, as well as of Christians, to throw the broad mantle of charity over the imperfections and frailties of their brethren, yet neither should ever permit themselves to extend its ample folds for the purpose of screening those who have disgraced themselves, and disturbed the peace of society by their crimes.” Ought, then, an institution, which has exercised such a power, to exist in a free country ?

V. The crime that has been committed in the name of the institution, was not perpetrated, as it has been contended, by ignorant fanatics ; but the conspiracy embraced much

of the intelligence and respectability of that enlightened portion of the country, and the murderers themselves were men of no mean consideration.

VI. The institution cannot vindicate itself from the stigma of this outrage. On the contrary, by the course they have taken since it was perpetrated, both the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter, have in fact assumed the responsibility of the transaction. For aught that those governing bodies have done, the convicts in that outrage, are as good Masons—standing *recti in curia*—as any of us. Ought men of principle and virtue to sustain such an institution, or remain connected with it?

VII. The conduct of Masons on the trials at the west, is a sufficient cause for the abandonment. “Grand Jurors “were false to their oaths, to truly present. Witnesses “upon trial were false to their oaths, to truly testify. Petit “Jurors were false to their oaths, to truly try. Witnesses “in some instances spurned the authority of the court, and “refused to testify, and in other instances even to be sworn. “Sheriffs corruptly returned partial grand jurors.”

VIII. The constructions that have been put upon the obligations, by Masons under oath, in courts of justice, have disqualified them from being impartial jurors, in cases where a brother Mason is a party. Decisions to this effect have been made in our own courts, of various grades, and in the courts of other states, where the question has been raised, and such is undoubtedly the law of the land. The taking of the obligations, as those to whom I refer have construed them, is very justly a cause of exclusion from a jury in such cases. And is it either wise or proper, to adhere to, and preserve, an institution which operates such a disfranchisement?

IX. The public sentiment is against the continuance of the institution. Although I am not a believer in the infallibility of the maxim “*vox populi vox Dei*,” yet it is no mark of wisdom obstinately to persist in opposition to the declar-

ed sentiments of the people, of all classes, and of all political parties. The institution has lost all of veneration that it ever possessed in the public mind; and now that the grand arcana of the lodge room have been fully disclosed to the rude gaze of the public, who among the order would desire ever again to march forth in public with their robes, and their lamb-skins, and their working tools, to encounter the broad grins of the populace?

X. Masons of pure hearts and sound principles, owe the relinquishment of the order to those of their fellow citizens who have stood by them,—refusing to denounce the whole body as fanatics and bigots, ready to commit crimes, if they have not already done it, for the sake of Masonry,—during the bitter warfare of the Anti-masons. There are many such, having no connexion with Masonry, but who, in refusing to confound the innocent with the guilty, have incurred all the odium that has been heaped upon the Masons themselves. As no possible good can evermore come of the order, its members owe it to this portion of the public to abandon it.

XI. The institution is on the wane; in most places it is dead; and its torpid body can never be reanimated. As well might they think of establishing Mahometanism in this enlightened land, as to cherish the idea of re-establishing Freemasonry. There is no use in contending, at this late hour, that the principles on which it was built, are moral, benevolent and virtuous;—public opinion is against it,—and it is the height of folly to court disfranchisement and proscription, when no possible benefit can arise from the sacrifice.

XII. If there are any who would still regard as a sacrifice the abandonment of the order, I reply, that even if it be a sacrifice, it is necessary for the public good. It is only by the relinquishment of the institution, that peace and social order can be restored in the regions of the Anti-

masonic excitement, and the public feeling brought again to healthy action. Adhering to Masonry from mere obstinacy against its opposite, will only keep alive, and spread wider, the rancour and heart-burning existing over a large space of our country.

XII. We owe the relinquishment of the order to the feelings of the religious community. However much we may deprecate the course that has been adopted upon this subject by most of the religious sects which are happily so numerous in our country, yet we cannot doubt the purity of their motives, and the sincerity of their opposition. They know that a foul murder has been committed by a band of Masons, in the name of the order. They have watched the progress of the trials, and marked the conduct of the accused, as well as of many others whose labors were directed—not in aid of the laws—but to shield their friends from justice. Members of the order know, that but a comparatively small number, were engaged in the wicked transaction. But from the mysterious connexion by which all the fraternity, individually and collectively, have been supposed to be bound together, those who are not members, know not how to discriminate, or where to draw the line of distinction. Hence the greater number are suffering for the delinquency of the less. Ought not respect, therefore, to be paid to the feelings,—call them the prejudices, if you please,—of nearly the whole religious public in the United States, by which means alone, the harmony of the christian church, as well as of the political world, can be restored.

These are conclusions to which I have arrived, after much reflection, and a long and laborious investigation of the whole matter; and I might add to the catalogue of reasons, which, in my poor judgment, ought to induce a voluntary, simultaneous, and universal abandonment of speculative Freemasonry in the United States. I am well aware

that many of my masonic brethren, will not at first coincide with me in these opinions. Such have not always been my own views, as the public well know. But I have formed these opinions from facts of a startling nature, as all who have done me the honor to accompany me through these pages will have seen. I have likewise witnessed how others have been affected by the influence of this institution; and I have often been astonished to perceive with what tenacity men of pure lives, and good consciences, cling to it. The minds of many excellent men seem actually crazed upon this subject. The whole consistency of their lives is reversed when you come upon the subject of Freemasonry. They appear to believe in it as a matter of religion and faith, and whoever questions its purity, and its excellence, is heretical. But I hope a more liberal feeling is now beginning to prevail, and that even many thousands who have hitherto refused to listen to the voice of reason upon the subject, will now at least be persuaded to take it up calmly, and reflect upon it. "I am satisfied," says Chancellor Walworth in a letter now before me, from which I have already quoted a few lines above, "that the evils of keeping up the institution hereafter, will more than counterbalance any good, which in this country can possibly be effected by it. And this has determined me, for the purpose of quieting the alarms of the community, and preserving the peace of neighborhoods, as well as to prevent divisions in the church of our Divine Master, to recommend that Masters should submit to the reasonable demands of the public, to cease their meetings, and that the lodges surrender up their charters." Yet Chancellor Walworth is a Mason, and strongly opposed to political Anti-masonry. Such, however, are his honest opinions, and such are the opinions of a vast majority of the most virtuous, most intelligent, and most distinguished men of our



country, without regard to sect, or profession, or party. I need not add, that such are my own opinions—as honestly entertained, as they have been frankly and fearlessly expressed.

I have the honor, sir, to remain, &c.

## APPENDIX.

(A.)

[It was the author's intention to have inserted in this place the seven obligations, as contained in Bernard; but this work has been necessarily extended so much further than was originally contemplated, that he must confine himself to the obligations of the third and seventh degrees, those being the most essential, and indeed embracing all that is important of the others.]

### OBLIGATION OF A MASTER MASON.

"I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, in presence of Almighty God, and this Worshipful Lodge of Master Masons, erected to God, and dedicated to the holy order of St. John, do hereby and hereon, most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, in addition to my former obligations, that I will not give the degree of a Master Mason to any one of an inferior degree, nor to any other being in the known world, except it be to a true and lawful brother, or brethren, Master Mason, or within the body of a just and lawfully constituted lodge of such; and not unto him, nor unto them, whom I shall hear so to be, but unto him and them only whom I shall find so to be after strict trial and due examination, or lawful information received. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not give the Master's word, which I shall hereafter receive, neither in the lodge, nor out of it, except it be on the five points of fellowship, and then not above my breath. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not give the grand hailing sign of distress, except I am in real distress, or for the benefit of the craft when at work; and should I ever see that sign given, or the word accompanying it, and the person who gave it appearing to be in distress, I will fly to his relief at the risk of my life, should there be a greater probability of saving his life than of losing my own. Furthermore do I promise and swear, that I will not wrong this lodge, nor a brother of this degree, to the value of one cent, knowingly, myself, nor suffer it to be done by others, if in my power to prevent it. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not be at the initiating, passing, and raising a candidate at one communication, without a regular dispensation from the Grand Lodge for the same. Furthermore, do I promise and swear that I will not be at the initiating, passing, or raising a candidate in a clandestine lodge, I knowing it to be such. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not be at the initiating of an old man in dotage, a young man in nonage, an atheist, irreligious libertine, idiot, madman, hermaphrodite, nor woman. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not speak evil of a brother Master Mason, neither behind his back, nor before his face, but will apprise him of all approaching danger, if in my power. Furthermore, do I promise and swear that I will not violate the chastity of a Master Mason's wife, mother, sister, or daughter, I knowing them to be such, nor suffer it to be done by others, if in my power to prevent it. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will support the constitution of the Grand Lodge of the state of ———, under which this lodge is held, and conform to all the by-laws, rules, and regulations of this or any other lodge of which I may at any time hereafter become a member. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will obey all regular signs, summons, or tokens, given, handed, sent, or thrown to me, from the hand of a brother Master Mason, or from the body of a just and lawfully constituted lodge of such, provided it be within the length of my cable tow. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that a Master Mason's secrets, given to me in charge as such, and I knowing them to be such, shall remain as secure and inviolable in my breast as in his own, when communicated to me, murder and treason excepted; and they left to my own election. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will go on a Master Mason's errand, whenever required, even should I have to go barefoot, and bareheaded, if within the length of my cable tow. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will be aiding and assisting all poor indigent Master Masons, their wives and orphans, whosoever dispersed round the globe, so far as in my power, without injuring myself or family materially. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that if any part of this my solemn oath or obligation be omitted at this time, that I will hold myself amenable thereto, whenever informed. To all which I do most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a fixed and steady purpose of mind in me, to keep and perform the same, binding myself under no less penalty than to have my body severed in two in the midst, and divided to the north and south, my bowels burnt to ashes in the

centre, and the ashes scattered before the four winds of heaven, that there might not the least track or trace of remembrance remain among men or Masons of so vile and perjured a wretch as I should be, were I ever to prove wilfully guilty of violating any part of this my solemn oath or obligation of a Master Mason. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same.

#### OBLIGATION OF A ROYAL ARCH MASON.

I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God, and this chapter of Royal Arch Masons, erected to God, and dedicated to the holy order of St. John, do hereby and hereon, most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, in addition to my former obligations, that I will not give the degree of Royal Arch Mason to any one of an inferior degree, nor to any other being in the known world, except it be to a true and lawful companion Royal Arch Mason, or within the body of a just and legally constituted chapter of such, and not unto him or unto them whom I shall hear so to be, but unto him or them only whom I shall find so to be, after strict trial, due examination, or legal information received. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not give the Grand Omnific Royal Arch word, which I shall hereafter receive, neither in the chapter nor out of it, except there be present two companions Royal Arch Masons, who, with myself, make three, and then by three times three, under a living arch, not above my breath. Furthermore, that I will not reveal the ineffable characters belonging to this degree, or retain the key to them in my possession, but destroy it, whenever it comes to my sight. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not write this chapter, nor a companion of this degree, to the value of any thing, knowingly myself, or suffer it to be done by others, if in my power to prevent it. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not be at the exaltation of a candidate to this degree, at a clandestine chapter, I knowing it to be such. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not assist or be present at the exaltation of a candidate to this degree who has not regularly received the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason, Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, to the best of my knowledge and belief. Furthermore, that I will not assist or see more or less than three candidates exalted at one and the same time. Furthermore, that I will not assist or be present at the forming or opening of a Royal Arch Chapter, unless there be present nine regular Royal Arch Masons. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not speak evil of a companion Royal Arch Mason, neither behind his back nor before his face, but will apprise him of approaching danger, if in my power. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will not strike a companion Royal Arch Mason in anger, so as to draw his blood. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will support the constitution of the General Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the United States of America, also the constitution of Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the state under which this chapter is held, and conform to all the by-laws, rules, and regulations of this, or any other chapter of which I may hereafter become a member. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will obey all regular signs, summons, or tokens given, handed, sent, or thrown to me, from the hand of a companion Royal Arch Mason, or from the body of a just and lawfully constituted chapter of such, provided it be within the length of my cable tow. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will aid and assist a companion Royal Arch Mason, when engaged in any difficulty, and espouse his cause, so far as to extricate him from the same, if in my power, whether he be right or wrong. Also, that I will promote a companion Royal Arch Mason's political preferment in preference to another of equal qualifications. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that a companion Royal Arch Mason's secrets, given me in charge as such, and I knowing them to be such, shall remain as secure and inviolable in my breast as in his own, *murder and treason not excepted*. Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that I will be aiding and assisting all poor and indigent Royal Arch Masons, their widows and orphans, wherever dispersed around the globe, so far as in my power, without material injury to myself or family. All which I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution to perform the same, without any equivocation, mental reservation, or self evasion of mind in me whatever; binding myself under no less penalty, than that of having my skull smote off, and my brains exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, should I ever knowingly, or willingly, violate or transgress any part of this my solemn oath, or obligation, of a Royal Arch Mason. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in the performance of the same.

(B.)

#### OLD MS. COPY OF ROYAL ARCH OBLIGATION.

[It was the author's first intention to have inserted in this place, all the obligations, as contained in the old MSS mentioned in the text, that the reader might be the better enabled to judge how rapidly these obligations have been increasing in length, even within the last thirty years. But he is compelled to suppress them, for the same reason mentioned above, viz: the already unforeseen extent of the work. It may, however, be enough to remark, that neither of the obligations, in the first three degrees, as written out in three manuscripts, is more than half as long as those disclosed by Morgan, and in common use. The obligations for the remaining four degrees of ancient Masonry, so called, are very much shorter.]

The Royal Arch obligation, so long and cumbersome, as given above, is all comprised in the ancient ritual before me, under the four brief heads following:—1st. For ever to conceal the secrets of this degree;—2d. Not to give the Royal Arch word, unless in the manner

in which it is received :—3d. Not to assist in the exaltation of a Royal Arch Mason, unless five members are present, nor more nor less than three at any one time :—4th. To aid, support, protect, and defend a Royal Arch Mason, even with the sword, if necessary." To this is added the penalty, as given by Morgan.

N. B. These MSS. give a more sensible and intelligible, and a less exceptionable, account of the seven degrees of Masonry, than any other work the author has seen. While Morgan was at Rochester, these papers were there, and already written to his hands.

## (C.)

The following was the only obligation for all three of the degrees of ancient Masonry, in the year 1730—only 102 years ago. At that time there were but three degrees known :—

"I hereby solemnly vow and swear, in the presence of Almighty God, and this right worshipful assembly, that I will hail and conceal, and never reveal, the secrets or secrecy of Masons or Masonry that shall be revealed unto me, unless to a true and lawful brother, after an examination, or in a just and worshipful lodge of brothers and fellows well met. 2d. I furthermore promise and vow, that I will not write them, print them, mark them, carve them, or engrave them, or cause them to be written, printed, marked, carved, or engraved on wood or stone, so as the visible character or impression of a letter may appear, whereby it may be unlawfully obtained. All this, under no less penalty than to have my throat cut, my tongue taken from the roof of my mouth, my heart plucked from under my left breast, then to be buried in the sand of the sea, the length of a cable-ropes from shore, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, my body to be burnt to ashes, my ashes to be scattered upon the face of the earth, so that there shall be no resemblance of me among Masons. So help me God."

## (D.)

*First Proclamation of the Governor.*

DE WITT CLINTON, Governor of the State of New-York, to state officers and (L. S.) ministers of justice in said state, and particularly in the county of Genesee, and the neighboring counties—*Greeting* :

Whereas, information, under oath, has been transmitted to me by Theodore F. Talbot, Esquire, and other citizens of the county of Genesee, acting as a committee in behalf of the people of that county, representing that divers outrages and oppressions have been committed on the rights of persons residing in the village of Batavia, and that disturbances have ensued, which are injurious, and may prove destructive to peace and good order in that quarter. Now, therefore, I enjoin it upon you, and each of you, to pursue all proper and efficient measures for the apprehension of the offenders, and the prevention of future outrages. And I do also request the good citizens of this state, to co-operate with the civil authorities in maintaining the ascendancy of law and good order.

## (E.)

*Second Proclamation of the Governor.*

Whereas, it has been represented to me, that William Morgan, who was unlawfully conveyed from the jail of the county of Ontario, sometime in the month of September last, has not been found, and that it might have a beneficial effect in restoring him to his family and in promoting the detection and punishment of the perpetrators of this violent outrage, if, in addition to the proceeding heretofore adopted by me, a proclamation was issued offering a specific reward for these purposes :—Now, therefore, in order that the offenders may be brought to condign punishment and the violated majesty of the laws thereby effectually vindicated, I do hereby offer, in addition to the assurances of compensation heretofore given, a reward of three hundred dollars for the discovery of the offenders and a reward of one hundred dollars for the discovery of any and every one of them, to be paid on conviction ; and also a further reward of two hundred dollars for authentic information of the place where the said William Morgan has been conveyed, and I do enjoin it upon all sheriffs, magistrates, and other officers and ministers of justice to be vigilant and active in the discharge of their duties on this occasion.

(L. S.) In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and the privy seal at the city of Albany, this 26th day of October, Anno Domini 1828.

DE WITT CLINTON.

*Third Proclamation of the Governor.*

Whereas, the measures adopted for the discovery of William Morgan, after his unlawful abduction from Canandaigua in September last, have not been attended with success ; and whereas many of the good citizens of this state are under an impression, from the lapse of time and other circumstances, that he has been murdered :—Now, therefore, to the end that, if living, he may be restored to his family, and, if murdered, that the perpetrators may be brought to condign punishment, I have thought fit to issue this proclamation, promising a reward of one thousand dollars for the discovery of the offender or offenders, to be paid on con-

viction and on the certificate of the Attorney General, or officer prosecuting on the part of the state, that the person or persons claiming the said last mentioned reward, is or are justly entitled to the same under this proclamation. And I further promise a free pardon, so far as I am authorised under the constitution of this state, to any accomplice or co-operator who shall make a full discovery of the offender or offenders. And I do enjoin it upon all officers and ministers of justice, and all other persons, to be vigilant and active in bringing to justice the perpetrators of a crime so abhorrent to humanity and so derogatory from the ascendancy of law and good order.

(L. 8.) In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and the privy seal, at the city of Albany, this 19th day of March, Anno Domini 1827.

DE WITT CLINTON.

(F.)

*From the Albany Masonick Record, Feb. 10.*

The Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the state of New-York commenced its annual session in this city on Tuesday last, and adjourned this day. Upwards of one hundred and ten subordinate chapters were represented. Previous to its adjournment, the following proceedings were had:—

*To the Most Excellent the Grand Chapter of the State of New-York:—*

The committee appointed by resolution of the Grand Chapter, on the affair of William Morgan, respectfully reported:

That they have attended to the duties assigned them, and that from the highly agitated and inflamed state of public feeling on this subject, and from the false and undeserved imputations which have been thrown upon Freemasons, and the masonic order generally, your committee deem it proper that this Grand Chapter should make a public expression of its sentiments in relation to the affair alluded to. Your committee, as expressive of their views on the subject embraced in this report, would offer for the consideration of the Grand Chapter, the following preamble and resolutions:—

Whereas, the rights of personal liberty and security are guaranteed by the free constitution, under which we, the members of this Grand Chapter, in common with the rest of our fellow citizens, have the happiness to live; and whereas, we esteem the preservation of these rights of vital importance to the perpetuity and full enjoyment of the blessings of our republican institutions: and whereas, the community has lately witnessed a violation of the same, under the alleged pretext of the masonic name and sanction, (in the case of William Morgan): and whereas, the principles of our ancient and honorable fraternity contain nothing which in the slightest degree justify or authorize such proceedings; but, on the contrary, do in all their tenets and ceremonies, encourage and inculcate a just submission to the laws, the enjoyment of equal rights by every individual, and a high and elevated spirit of personal as well as national independence:—

*Therefore, Resolved*, By this Grand Chapter, that we its members, individually, and as a body, do disclaim all knowledge or approbation of the said proceedings, in relation to the abduction of the said William Morgan; and that we disapprove of the same, as a violation of the majesty of the laws, and an infringement of the rights of personal liberty, secured to every citizen of our free and happy republic.

*Resolved*, That the foregoing report, preamble and resolution be published.

A true extract from the minutes of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the state of New-York.

JOHN O. COLE, *G. Secretary*.

(G.)

“Governor Clinton,

“Sir,”

“I have seen a letter from you to Mr. Le Roy, requesting him to demand of the editors of the Gazette the author of a communication addressed to you in that paper. I am the author. In your letter to Mr. Le Roy, you say you had no knowledge of the outrages, and have never given any advice on that subject. If such are the facts, which I have no reason to doubt, your name has been used for the basest of motives. And who have thus used it? The Masons. And why have they used it? For the express purpose of throwing their own crimes upon your head. Your name has been used more or less by Masons in this section of the country, ever since the outrages; and at this time a majority of the people are so firmly in the belief that you were consulted on that subject, that it is entirely useless to urge any arguments upon that point in your favor. At the commencement of the outrages I did not believe any assertions made by Masons respecting your knowledge on that subject. Neither did I suppose that they would go so far as to take life, in violation of all law. But since I have been convinced, in my own mind, of the fate of the unfortunate man, I have thought that the leaders of the outrages had authority from some source or other, and what source I do not know. From assertions made by Masons, (respecting you,) that were engaged in the disgraceful affair, my faith in your republican principles was considerably shaken. I am a Mason, and I have ever condemned the outrages. The morning that the Masons went from this place to Batavia, to arrest Col. Miller, I and two or three others raised

“*Le Roy, Nov. 13th, 1827.*”

ed our then feeble voices against the proceedings. We told them that the only way was to hold perfectly still, that if they proceeded, they would give a credit to the work that it otherwise could never have. I was then told by their leader, that older persons had been consulted; and another one said that you had been written to, and that he had sworn not to permit it—[permit the book to be printed]—or suffer it to be done, if within his power to prevent it, and go he would.

"There is one thing that I regret, and that is this, that I had not forwarded that communication to you, instead of the Gazette. But I had rather it would be as it is, than not have been at all, for I have affidavits from Masons that were engaged in the outrages, which will substantiate my assertions, and put the matter in a train that justice to yourself requires. Mr. Le Roy will forward you copies of four affidavits, three from Masons who went to Batavia on the 19th of September, 1836, and one from Mr. Griffin, who is not a Mason. I presume your only object is to trace to its source, [and ascertain] the author of those slanderous reports. After perusing those affidavits, you will be your own judge what course to pursue.

"Yours, respectfully,  
"JAMES BALLARD."

[H.]

*State of New-York,* } Franklin Marsh being duly sworn deposes and says, that on the  
*Genesee County, ss.* } twelfth day of September, eighteen hundred and twenty-six, this deponent was in company with James Ganson, and one other person not now recollected by this deponent; that the said James Ganson was asked if he had authority from the Governor to suppress or prevent the printing of the secrets of Masonry, then about to be printed at Batavia; that the said James Ganson replied to said question—"We have a letter," at the same time placing his hand against his coat pocket, and that this deponent concluded from the manner, that the said James Ganson replied to said question, that he then had a written communication from the Governor of the state of New-York, authorising the suppression of the publication of the said secrets of Masonry, and this deponent then believed that the said James Ganson had a letter from the Governor on the subject of preventing the said publication.

FRANKLIN MARSH.

Taken and subscribed this 12th day of November, 1837, before me,

B. SKINNER, J. P.

*State of New-York,* } Hiram Griffin, of the town of Le Roy, in said county, being duly  
*Genesee County, ss.* } sworn according to law doth depose and say, that in the month of August or September last, in a conversation which this deponent had at that time with Franklin Marsh, of Le Roy, aforesaid, in relation to the outrages and attacks made upon the person and property of David C. Miller, of Batavia, in said county, in September eighteen hundred and twenty-six, the said Marsh then declared in the presence of this deponent, and in the said conversation, that he, the said Marsh, should not have gone to Batavia, if he had not seen a letter from De Witt Clinton, or the Governor, which letter authorised him and others to take the course in relation to said Miller and his property which they did take; and that he, the said Marsh, wished the fault should fall or come upon the persons who authorised them to take the course they did.

HIRAM GRIFFIN.

Subscribed and sworn this 10th day of November, 1837, before me,

SAMUEL SKINNER, J. P.

*State of New-York,* } Elias Cooley being duly sworn deposes and says, that this depo-  
*Genesee County, ss.* } nent was in company with James Ganson, on the twelfth day of September, eighteen hundred and twenty-six, and that the said James Ganson, then stated to this deponent, or in this deponent's hearing, that the Governor had written on, or that letters had been received from the Governor, by him, directing the manner of proceeding to suppress the publication of the secrets of Masonry, or of the book, (the conversation then referring to the book Morgan and Miller were about publishing on the secrets of Masonry, at Batavia,) to the best knowledge and belief of this deponent; and that this deponent verily believed from the above statements, that the said James Ganson, or some other person had received a letter or written communication from the Governor, directing a suppression of the publication of said book on the secrets of Masonry, then about to be published by the said Morgan and Miller, at Batavia.

ELIAS COOLEY.

Taken and subscribed this 13th day of November, 1837, before me,

JACOB BARTOW, Comm'r, &c.

*State of New-York,* } Hollis Pratt being duly sworn, deposes and says, that on the  
*Genesee County, ss.* } twelfth day of September, eighteen hundred and twenty-six, this deponent was in company with James Ganson, and in a conversation about the secrets of Masonry being revealed at Batavia, the said James Ganson told this deponent that a man had been to see the Governor, or had received a letter from him, and this deponent does not now recollect which; and this deponent asked him who that man was, and his reply was, Gains B. Rich.

HOLLIS PRATT.

Subscribed and Sworn this 13th day of November, 1837, before me,

B. SKINNER, J. P.

(1)

*State of New-York, } James Ganson, of the town of Le Roy, in said county, being duly  
 Genesee County, ss. } sworn deposes and says, that the statement contained in the af-  
 fidavit of Franklin Marsh, that he, this deponent, "was asked if he had authority from  
 the Governor to suppress or prevent the printing of the secrets of Masonry, then about to  
 be printed at Batavia, and that he, this deponent, replied to the said question 'we have a  
 letter,' and at the same time placed his hands upon his coat pocket," is not true; and this  
 deponent further says, that the statement in the affidavit of Elias Cooley, that he, this de-  
 ponent, stated to said Cooley, or to any other person, that the Governor had written on,  
 or that letters had been received from him by this deponent, (or any other person,) direct-  
 ing the manner of proceeding to suppress the publication of the secrets of Masonry, or of  
 the book, as stated in the said affidavit, is not true; and this deponent further says, that the  
 statement contained in the affidavit of Hollis Pratt, that he, this deponent, in a conversation  
 with said Pratt, about the secrets of Masonry being published at Batavia, told the said Pratt  
 that a man had been to see the Governor, and had a letter from him, and that this de-  
 ponent named Gains B. Rich as such person, is wholly without foundation in truth; and this  
 deponent further says, that he has never, on any occasion, said, nor does he believe that his  
 excellency De Witt Clinton, was in any manner concerned, or countenanced, or had any  
 previous knowledge of the late outrages and proceedings in relation to William Morgan, and  
 the suppression of a publication announced by him and D. C. Miller, of the secrets of Free-  
 masonry: that the story that a letter was received by this deponent from Governor Clinton,  
 authorising the suppression of said publication, or in relation to the same, or that any letter,  
 or other written or verbal communication whatever, had been received by this deponent  
 from Governor Clinton, is utterly without foundation—neither was any such letter, to the  
 knowledge of this deponent, or any written or verbal communication upon the subject re-  
 ceived by any other person from Governor Clinton.*

JAMES GANSON.

Sworn and subscribed this 10th day of January, 1829, before me,

JACOB BARTOW, Commissioner.

## EXTRACT FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL GRAND CHAPTER.

[The annexed extract from the proceedings of the General Grand Chapter of the United States, at their triennial meeting, held in the city of New York, in September 1829, embraces the tribute of respect paid to the memory of De Witt Clinton by that body, referred to at the close of the letter of Col. Knapp, page 316. It was written by Col. Knapp, and is as feeling and beautiful, as it is eloquent and just.]

September 11, 1829.

## AFTERNOON SESSION.

Most Excellent Companion Knapp, from the committee appointed on the subject of the death of Most Excellent De Witt Clinton, made the following report, to wit:

The committee that had under consideration the subject of a proper notice of our bereavement in the death of De Witt Clinton, the first officer of this masonic body, ask leave to report—

That, as more than nineteen months have elapsed since this mournful event, in their opinion, the customary funeral rites so consonant to the heaviness of recent grief, and so proper in their season, should be dispensed with at this meeting; as shrouding our council chamber in black, or wearing a badge of mourning for thirty days, would add nothing to the deep sense we feel at our loss, or fix more indelibly in our minds, the recollections of his services; but as no accident nor length of time, can ever efface, or blot out his name from the pages of his country's history, or lessen the weight of his character, we deem it most meet and proper, while in session for the first time after his death, to leave on our records a brief memorial of so great and good a man as our late High Priest, and also to tell the world how sincerely we loved him, and to give our successors, or those who may search our archives, hereafter, to understand what manner of man we thought him; we who lived in his day, and were guided by his counsels.

For in him were united, exalted genius, profound acquirements, a happy tact in business, with great patience, and unwearied industry. In the morning of life he took up the noble determination to be great, and to make usefulness the basis of that greatness.

He came to the duties of a freeman when our Republic, exhausted with the struggles for independence, was attempting to fix our institutions upon the rights of man, and the principles of eternal justice, but there was often seen a timid hand and vacillating policy. In the conflict of honest opinions he boldly took his part, and if his zeal at times excited the fears of his followers, his patriotism won the hearts of his opponents.

The portals of knowledge were then just opening anew, in this country, with the brightest promises, and he was charmed with all her paths. With the grasp of genius he held the lamp of science through the wanderings of literature, and the mazes of politics; and moral, political and literary institutions received advantages from his intellectual light: nor was he content to rest here; for he saw at a glance that Omnipotence when he stamped the features and marked the physiognomy of the earth, gave intimations to man that he might change and improve these features for his benefit. His mind no sooner conceived than his soul was fired with the project, which he carried into effect; it was no narrow plan, no

pitiful experiment, governed by village economy, or district politics; the design was worthy of a master mind, and the execution of an herculean arm: the seas of the wilderness were united with the Atlantic Ocean. He saw the labor finished, and heard the *voice of the people pronounce it to be good*. In the midst of these arduous labors he did not forget how much human happiness depends upon well regulated affections, and permanent charities, and he entered the pale of our order, and assumed the duties of master, almoner, and priest; to teach the ignorant and to check the wandering; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and to implore blessings upon all mankind.

He was morally, as well as physically, brave—and in the generosity of his nature, pitied that miserable flock, who in the mild and peaceful day, turned their plowage to the sun for brilliant reflections to attract notice and gain admiration from the world; but who were not to be found when the elements were troubled. He poised his eagle-wing in the whirlwind, and fearlessly breasted the peltings of the storm.

His enemies reviewing his life, are silent when they cast up the amount of his virtues, and his friends love him the more when they recount the deeds he has done: malice never charged him with avarice, nor did slander ever whisper that he could be corrupted by gold: if sometimes disappointed ambition in a paroxysm, at the loss of office, alleged that he was partial, in a calmer moment she was forced to confess, that his errors (for he was human and could not be free from them,) sprung from the irregular pulsation of too warm a heart; and from too much confidence in the professions of assimilated virtue; and even envy, that first waxes, and then believes all ill,—owns, since he is gone, that the only harvest he ever gathered in was glory; and all must acknowledge, that the only estate that he left for his orphan children, is his fame.

His exertions were not limited to the temporal welfare of his fellow men, for he knew that the excellency of all knowledge consists in divine truth, and he was unremitting in his efforts to disseminate the sacred writings, believing that in them are the oracles of God, and the promises of everlasting life.

His death has been deplored as that of one who died too early;—but if the prominent deeds of men are so many mile stones on the journey of life, his course cannot have been short who has set up so many monuments as he travelled onward to eternity: true, all was finished before age had required the sustaining staff, or the helping hand.

Such was our companion and brother, the late chief officer of this General Grand Chapter. The pride of those who lived and acted with him, and an example for those who may hereafter arise to take a distinguished part in the welfare of our country.

Let learned biographers write his life; let talented artists chisel his monument, and mould his bust for an admiring people, while we must content ourselves with a miniature profile of him, traced in a single moment, when kneeling at our altars; but there is some consolation for us in feeling that this sketch is made, as it were, upon our jewels, and is to be worn on our breasts, an emblem, a faint one indeed, of his image in our hearts.

Samuel L. Knapp,	} Committee.
Joseph K. Stapleton,	
Jonathan Nye,	
Joel Clapp,	
Daniel L. Gibbins,	

Which was read, accepted, and the General Grand Secretary directed to present a copy thereof to the widow of the deceased.